K. Johansen C. H. 1

Hermippus Redivivus:

OR, THE

SAGE's TRIUMPH

OVER

OLD AGE and the GRAVE.

Wherein a Method is laid down for

Prolonging the LIFE and VIGOUR of MAN.

INCLUDING

A COMMENTARY upon an Antient INSCRIPTION, in which this great SECRET is revealed; supported by numerous Authorities.

The whole Interſperſed with

A great Variety of remarkable and well atteſted Relations.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON,
Printed for J. NOURSE, Bookſeller to HIS MAJESTY.
MDCCLXXI.

THE

PREFACE.

IF cuſtom had not eſtabliſhd a ſort of neceſſity of prefixing ſomething of this kind to whatever is ſent abroad, the following ſheets might have been ſafely truſted without a preface. For, in the firſt place, this book is publiſhed not to excite, but to gratify the curioſity of the lovers of learning, who have enquired after it very diligently, and expreſſed a great deſire to ſee by what arguments Dr. Cohauſen endeavoured to ſupport ſo extraordinary a ſyſtem. And, on the other hand, again, the book itſelf is ſo methodical, and every thing therein follows ſo naturally, that the reader is led in a direct road from the beginning to the end; and as he is in no danger

of miſtaking his way, there is the leſs occaſion for affording him ſupernumerary lights in an introduction like this.

BUT, ſince we have undertaken to write a preface, it may not be amiſs to obſerve therein, that very few books contain ſo great a variety in ſo narrow a compaſs. The author appears to be a man of great reading, and deep reflection, for moſt of the books he cites are equally ſcarce and curious; but then he does not, like many of the German authors, content himſelf with barely embroidering his margins, which may be ſometimes done by tranſcribing thoſe of other writers, but generally gives you the paſſages that make for his purpoſe, and very often characters of the authors themſelves; and this alone, renders his work of great utility, to ſuch as deſire to be acquainted with the merit of books, ſeldom to be met with, and which, on that very account, are ſwelled to a high price.

ANOTHER remarkable thing in this treatiſe, is, the choice the author has made of his quotations, which are as entertaining as they are inſtructive; or is it eaſy to conceive,

ceive, without reading his book, how it was poſſible for a man to enliven ſo dry a ſubject, as his ſeems to be, in the manner he has done. The extracts he has given from Bacon the monk, plainly ſhew the prodigious knowlege of that extraordinary perſon, who, when all Europe was involved in the thickeſt miſt of ignorance, ſeems to have poſſeſſed alone ſuch a treaſure of ſcience, as would have rendered him a very conſiderable man, even in the moſt enlightened ages, and may poſſibly engage ſome able writer to give us ſuch an abridgment of his works, as the ingenious and learned Dr. Shaw has done of thoſe of chancellor Bacon, and the famous Boyle; which, if judiciouſly performed, and illuſtrated as they are, with proper notes, would do equal ſervice to the republic of letters, and honour to our country.

THE ſtories he inſerts of Eugenius Philalethes, Signor Gualdi, and the celebrated Flamel, are not only extremely diverting, but may contribute alſo to the procuring us ſome well-written hiſtory of the pretenders to the philoſopher's ſtone; which, as it would be a very

very curious and entertaining piece, ſo if compiled from good authorities, and handled in a proper manner, it might be of conſiderable uſe *, ſince the number of operators in that way has of late years mightily encreaſed, eſpecially in this country, where there are many who have given themſelves up to that deluſive ſtudy, though they endeavour to conceal themſelves, and their labours, with the utmoſt ſecrecy, in order to avoid that ridicule which generally attends the profeſſors of the ocult ſciences. In Germany, however, this kind of learning is ſtill in vogue and credit, and it is ſcarce poſſible for any one to obtain a conſiderable reputation as a man of letters, who has not a touch at leaſt of chemiſtry.

WITH reſpect to the capital view of our author, in recommending that doctrine which he deduces from the inſcription in the front

* Since the publication of the firſt edition, I have been favoured with ſuch a hiſtory, ſaid to be writ by a German adept, of which, perhaps, if the public ſhew a deſire of it, they may hear more in time to come.

of

of his book, it is certainly managed with great ſkill and ingenuity, ſo that if the reader ſhould at laſt reject its probability, he muſt be obliged, notwithſtanding, to confeſs that the writer has not employed his pains to little or no purpoſe, but has introduced ſo many curious enquiries, and thrown out ſo many valuable hints, that his book muſt be allowed a performance of great merit, whatever becomes of Hermippus and his ſecret. Of this the author himſelf ſeems to be very well aware, and therefore while he puſhes his argument with the greateſt vigour, and appears evidently to have his deſign much at heart; he, notwithſtanding, takes all along ſuch precautions, as are neceſſary to defend him from the imputation of being a whimſical, conceited, or pedantic writer, as almoſt any other man would have been thought, who had undertaken ſuch a taſk. Upon the whole, there is in this diſſertation, ſuch a mixture of ſerious irony, as cannot but afford a very agreeable entertainment to thoſe who are proper judges of ſubjects of this kind, and who are inclined to ſee how far the ſtrength of human underſtanding can ſupport philoſophical truths againſt

againſt received notions, and vulgar prejudices.

HAVING thus taken the ſame liberty with our author, which he has done with other learned men, the whole is ſubmitted to the judgment of the candid reader, who will, doubtleſs, retain ſome tenderneſs for the pains that have been taken for his amuſement, and not paſs a harſh cenſure on a piece which we may boldly ſay, has nothing in it dogmatical, tedious, or offenſive.

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Hermip-

Hermippus Redivivus:

OR, THE

Art of Preſerving YOUTH.

IT was the laudable cuſtom of the ancients, to perpetuate the memory of all ſignal events, and eſpecially ſuch as in any degree might be uſeful to poſterity, by inſcriptions. Theſe had a peculiar ſtile, in which three things were principally regarded; ſuccinctneſs, elegancy, and clearneſs. It would have been inconvenient, and indeed prepoſterous, to have drawn ſuch pieces into a great length, conſidering the places in which they were erected; that is to ſay, markets, temples, or public roads; or, the matter whereon they were inſcribed, which was marble, or ſome other kind of hard or curious ſtone. But, if brevity was neceſſary, beauty was likewiſe expedient. Where there is nothing ſtriking, the memory ſoon loſes a thought. To retain what we are told, we muſt receive at

once both pleaſure and inſtruction. This neatneſs of ſtile, was peculiarly cultivated by the antients. It came originally from the Eaſt, where all ſcience was taught in parables and proverbs. In Greece, they refined upon this, and laid down the rudiments of knowledge in aphoriſms. Amongſt the Romans, this manner of teaching was much eſteemed, and nothing more admired, even in the politeſt ages, than ſentences. If they were afterwards abuſed, and improperly applied, this ought not to diſcredit them, ſince without queſtion they ever did, and always will, appear with the utmoſt propriety in that kind of writing of which I am ſpeaking. Laſtly, as to perſpicuity, the antients were exceedingly careful, and the difficulties that now ariſe about the true meaning of ſuch monuments of their learning as have reached our times, are rather owing to the misfortune of loſing ſuch accounts of their cuſtoms and manners, as might have made them eaſy and familiar to us, than to any want of clearneſs in the ſtile of their inſcriptions.

MEN of different profeſſions have employed themſelves with different views, in the ſtudy of thoſe large and curious collections, which learned and induſtrious perſons have made of ſuch remains of antient wiſdom, as having eſcaped oblivion, are now ſafely repoſited in the cabinets of the curious. Amongſt theſe, we are chiefly obliged to the celebrated Thomas Reineſius, who undertook to make a

ſupplement

ſupplement to the laborious work of Gruter, and has therein preſerved an infinite number of valuable inſcriptions; and amongſt the reſt, this, which hath given occaſion to my treatiſe.

ÆSCULAPIO ET SANITATI
L. CLODIUS. HERMIPPVS
QUI VIXIT ANNOS CXV. DIES V.
PUELLARUM ANHELITU
QUOD ETIAM POST MORTEM
EJUS
NON PARUM MIRANTUR PHYSICI
JAM POSTERI SIC VITAM DUCITE.

The learned Delechamp has given us a different account of this inſcription; according to him, it ſhould be read thus:

L. Clodius Hirpanus,
Vixit annos CLV. dies V.
Puerorum halitu refocillatus
Et educatus [a].

THE famous Cujas gives it us in the following manner.

L. Clodius Hirpanus,
Vixit annos CXV. dies V.
Alitus puerorum anhelitu [b].

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[a] In notis ad L. vii. c. 48. Plinii Natural. Hiſt.
[b] Ad Juſtiniani Novel. 5.

THESE various readings, though it cannot be denied that they affect the ſenſe ſtrongly, do not however, much concern the ſubject. The firſt tells us, that L. Clodius Hermippus lived one hundred and fifteen years, and five days, by the breath of young women, which is worthy the conſideration of phyſicians, and of poſterity. According to the commentator upon Pliny, the name of this long-liver was not Hermippus, but Herpanus, and the date of his life one hundred and fifty-five years, and five days, with this additional circumſtance, that he did not live by the breath of young women, but of young men. The lawyer again reduces the life to the former ſtandard, and contends only, that his name was Hirpanus, and that he received this extraordinary nouriſhment from the breath of youths.

IF therefore we take this inſcription as it ſtands by the conſent of all theſe writers, it informs us of a fact equally curious and important, viz. That a certain perſon, no matter whether his name was Hermippus, or Hirpanus, reached a very advanced age, by the uſe of the breath of young women, or of young men. Now, whether this were a real fact which actually happened, or whether it be the invention of ſome malicious wit amongſt the antients, in order to exerciſe the talents of poſterity, I concern not myſelf: It appears to me in the light of a phyſical problem, which may be expreſſed in very few words, viz. Whether the breath of young women may probably

probably contribute to the maintaining long life, and keeping off old age? This is what I propoſe to examine; this is to be the ſubject of my diſcourſe, in which, if what I deliver be entertaining and uſeful, the reader need not trouble himſelf much about the truth or falſehood of the inſcription.

BUT it will be neceſſary, before we come to the ſtrict examination of this propoſition, to remove ſome previous difficulties out of the way. In the firſt place, therefore, let us enquire, whether the term of life be a fixed or moveable thing. Some of the moſt learned among the Jews have thought it abſolutely determined by the decree of God, and have alledged various ſcriptures for the proof of this. [c] The moſt antient philoſophers, both in Chaldea and Egypt, thought the life of man depended upon the ſtars, and by pretending to predict its duration, plainly ſhewed, that they thought it abſolutely under the influence of the heavenly bodies [d]. The Stoics, if they meant the power of the ſtars, by what they ſtiled Fate, were alſo of this opinion; but whatever they meant by Fate, moſt evident it is, that they thought the life of man, as well as every other thing, depended thereupon [e]; and that conſequently it was unalterable by any means, within the compaſs of human power. Now, if there be any truth in theſe

[c] Manaſ. ben Iſrael, de term. vitæ. [d] Diod. Sicul. Hiſt. lib. 1. Diogen. Laert. [e] Plut. de placit. Philoſoph. Diogen. Laert. Senec.

opinions, if there be the leaſt foundation for any one of them, the caſe is clear, that all farther enquiries are vain; for, to what end ſhould we ſearch out the moſt probable means of extending life, when we are certain, that this is a thing beyond our capacity? or at leaſt, uncertain whether it be or not?

IN order to open the way to further ſpeculations upon this curious and important ſubject, I will begin with the ſolution of this difficulty, and take upon me to prove, that, contrary to the notions of theſe divines and philoſophers, there is no ſuch thing, as a ſettled term of life by the law of nature; or, which is the ſame thing in other words, by the expreſs will of divine providence. In the firſt place, I lay it down as an abſolute certainty, that contingency is eſſential to that mode of rule purſued by the divine power, in the management of ſublunary things. Cauſes indeed neceſſarily draw after them their effects; but then I deny that there is any chain of neceſſary cauſes; and becauſe it would require much time and ſpace to eſtabliſh this doctrine generally, I will keep cloſe to my ſubject, and content myſelf with proving it, as to this particular point. It is a thing agreed on all hands, that the law of Moſes propounded chiefly temporal bleſſings, and amongſt theſe, long life; now this is abſolutely incompatiable with the doctrine of a fixed term, and therefore, if there be any paſſages in the ſcripture which look this way, we muſt interpret

them

them in ſome other ſenſe, for the part muſt accord with the whole, and it is idle to alledge a few detached paſſages againſt the ſcheme of the whole book. Again we are told, that God commended Solomon for praying to him for wiſdom, rather than long life, or for riches, which plainly ſhews, that he might as well have aſked for either, as for it; but if this inference diſpleaſes, take the expreſs deciſion of God thereupon; who, in the ſame place, ſays, that if Solomon walked in the ways of David his father, he would lengthen his days [f]. Add to theſe arguments, that it was the conſtant practice of the beſt men, and ſuch as moſt intimately knew the will of God, to pray in terms irreconcileable to ſuch an abſolute decree. Thus Hezekiah deſired that his life might be ſpared [g]. Elias [h] and Jonah [i], that theirs might be ſhortened.

BUT, to put the matter out of doubt, one need only conſider the choice given to David, by the prophet Nathan [k], of war, peſtilence, or famine, in conſequence of which, he choſe peſtilence; now, if there had been a fixed time of life, how could this choice have poſſibly taken place? All the perſons who died of the peſtilence, muſt, according to the doctrine I am refuting, have died if there had been no peſtilence, becauſe the decreed term of their lives was expired. On the whole, therefore, it is apparent,

[f] 1 Kings iii. 11, 14. [g] Iſaiah xxxviii. 3, [h] 1 Kings xix. 4. [i] Jonah iv. 3. [k] 11 Samuel xxiv. 13.

that a fixed term of life is inconſiſtent with the reaſon of things, which is what we call the law of nature, wherein, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, there is a ſettled contingency. It is contrary to the principles of religion, as deducible from the natural light of our underſtandings, and it is directly contrary to revelation; ſo that I take it for granted, that the moſt pious man in the world, that will ſeriouſly conſider theſe arguments, muſt remain ſatisfied, that the order of providence, the will of heaven, or God's decree, which are the terms uſed by the divines on this ſubject, hath determined nothing abſolutely, concerning the term of life.

I AM next to ſpeak of the opinions of the aſtrologers, which of old, were aſcribed to Æſculapius, who, it is ſaid, laid down this maxim, That all things below were governed by the motions and aſpects of the ſtars. Againſt this notion I have two things to offer; the firſt is, that they could not poſſibly know this ſo to be, even granting it ſhould be true; becauſe they were abſolutely ignorant of the true ſyſtem of the heavens, and of the motions of thoſe bodies, whence they would derive ſo great a power. This puts their authority out of the caſe; for if we cannot depend upon them as aſtronomers, nothing in nature can be more ridiculous than to pretend to lay any ſtreſs on their judgment in aſtrology. To be convinced of this, we need only conſult the authentic accounts we have in antient authors of the Chaldaic

Chaldaic ſyſtem [1]; from whence it appears to be equally falſe and abſurd; falſe, as it is repugnant to the experience and obſervation of ſucceeding times; and abſurd, as it is contrary to the unalterable principles of reaſon and true ſcience. The other argument I alledge, is this; That ſince the authority of the antients is out of the caſe, if there be any modern Stoics, who are ſtill of this opinion, they muſt ſhew us the grounds of it, and this not from ſuch chimerical notions as are laid down by the pretended ſages in judiciary aſtrology, but from the ſettled and unqueſtioned principles of true philoſophy. When they do this, or, at leaſt, when they attempt to do it, it will be time enough to examine how far this new ſyſtem of theirs is rational. In the mean time, I will conclude this point with that ſettled and moſt reaſonable maxim of the civil law, "That about things which are not, and about things which cannot be made appear, there is the ſame reaſon;" that is, there can be no reaſoning about them, they muſt be conſidered in the ſame light, ſince nothing can be more idle, than to diſpute about the conſequences of a thing, before the thing is made manifeſt, or we have any real ground for a diſpute.

We have now done ſomewhat towards eſtabliſhing the foundation of our doctrine; but there is ſtill another vulgar notion in our way, which muſt be

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[1] Diod. Sicul. lib. i. Stanley's Chaldaic Philoſophy.

removed;

removed; or, to ſpeak more properly, explained. By this, I mean the prevailing opinion that the life of man is limited to a certain term, and becauſe we ſee people grow old at a certain age, by which I mean, grow infirm and decrepit; for oldneſs has not ſo much reference to time, as to condition; and I account him old who has loſt his ſtrength, rather than one who is advanced in years. But, becauſe I ſay the maladies that attend old age, come on in moſt people at a certain period, they are held to be neceſſary; and if there were any truth in this, we ſhould be ſtopped again; here would be a new barrier, through which we ſhould be able to find no paſſage; and when we talked of retarding old age, people would expect we ſhould make them young again. It is requiſite, therefore, that this matter be explained, and ſet right, and that the reader be ſatisfied how far the incommodities of old age are of neceſſity, and how far the product of natural cauſes, which may be affected by the ſkill and art of man.

THE human body is a machine, actuated by an immortal ſpirit, and, which is more to my purpoſe, fabricated by an almighty hand. It cannot be ſuppoſed, that this dwelling ſhould be ſo ſlightly, or ſo injudiciouſly contrived, as that it ſhould wear out in a very ſhort ſpace of time. This does not ſeem very agreeabe, either to the nature of man, conſidered as a rational creature, or with that infinite ſkill and wiſdom which is evident in the compoſition

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of the human frame. When therefore the divines ſay, that Sin introduces Death, they ſeem to ſpeak philoſophically; and if I may be allowed to explain their meaning, I ſhould be inclined to ſay, that diſeaſes and death are not incident to the human body by the will of God, or, which is the ſame thing, by the law of nature, but were ſuperinduced by the follies and vices of men, which carry in them naturally the ſeeds of death; and therefore, if it be an evil, we ought not to accuſe providence, but ourſelves. Yet I will readily acknowledge, that taking things as they now ſtand, and have ſtood for many ages paſt, there is no hope left of immortality in this body, or even of prolonging our lives to three or five hundred years; but ſtill I affirm, that there are no ſettled periods in nature, no inevitable laws which conjoin weakneſs and infirmity with a certain number of years; but that it is very poſſible, nay, and very practicable too, for a man to extend the length of his life, much beyond the common date, and that without feeling the incommodities of age, for otherwiſe, this would rather be avoiding death, than preſerving life.

To prove this, I ſhall firſt make uſe uſe of reaſon, and next of experience: I ſhall make it evident by arguments, that it may, and by inſtances, that it has been ſo; and then if any ſceptic has a mind to doubt the truth of my doctrine, I ſhall leave him in his own road, where his ignorance will infallibly bring upon him the juſt puniſhment of his obſtinacy,

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an haſtier extinction of life than he need otherwiſe have ſuffered.

ALL wiſe men have agreed that nature, by which I mean the wiſdom of God, manifeſted in the order of all things, acts uniformly in every reſpect, and aſſigns proper periods to all things. Solomon ſays, "There is a time to be born, and a time to die [m];" a ſhort maxim, which may admit of a long commentary. The life of man does not certainly conſiſt in eating and drinking, in waking or ſleeping, or in the indulging by turns the gratification of his many appetites; for if this was ſo, the uſual term of life would certainly be long enough, and there have been actually inſtances of people who have been ſo ſatiated with the round of theſe trivial actions, as to be weary of life before death was at hand, and in conſequence of this wearineſs have haſtened it. But as the divine old man juſtly obſerves, "Art is long, and life is ſhort [n]; thas is, there ſeems to be no juſt proportion between the powers of the mind, and the force of the body. We hurry on from infancy to childhood; from childhood to the age of man; from thence, to what is ſtiled middle-aged, and then we decline a-pace into feebleneſs, miſery, and dotage. Can any man think that this is the true order of nature? Has nature given ſo many years to pikes, to eagles,

[m] Eccleſ. iii. 2. [n] Vita brevis, ars longa, occaſio celeris, experimentum periculoſum, judicium difficile. Hippocrat. Aphoriſm. I.

and to ſtags, nay, and to ſerpents, at the ſame time that ſhe denies it to man? Be it far from us to believe this; let us rather ſtifle our pride and conceitedneſs, and believe that the ſhortneſs of life flows from the weakneſs and wickedneſs of man.

But it will be ſaid, that death is not barely the end of diſeaſes, but that old age is as much a diſeaſe as any other, and cerainly brings it on. That the human frame is ſo conſtituted as not only to encreaſe and arrive at perfection, but to decay alſo, and wear out. That the flame of life grows after a certain time weaker and weaker; that the ſolids loſe their tone by degrees, and that the veſſels grow cartilaginous, and become at laſt boney; ſo that death, by old age, is a natural thing °. Be it ſo, I am not contending that men may live for ever, or that they may live, as I ſaid before, three or five hundred years; but this I ſay, that old age is the only diſeaſe to which we are ſubject by nature; and that from this, it is very poſſible men may be much longer defended than they uſually are by the help of art. This I ſay, principally on the grounds I have before laid down, viz. That the human body is a machine admirably contrived; from whence I infer that it may, with due care, be kept in good order, and that the true ends of life, being ſuch as require a much greater extent of time than the

° Boerhaave Inſtitut. Medic. § 474, 475, 1053, 1054.

ordinary

ordinary period of life allows; therefore it is more likely, that this unreaſonable brevity ſhould be the effect of our want of ſkill, of care, or of attention, than owing to any law laid down by the omniſcient author of all things. Theſe are my principles, which I ſubmit to the ſtricteſt examination; if they can be demonſtrated to be either falſe or precarious, I ſhall be ſorry for myſelf, and for mankind; ſince undoubtedly they carry in them a ſtrong appearance of truth, and of the moſt pleaſing kind of truth, that which attributes glory to God, by diſplaying his good will to man. But leſt any one ſhould ſay, that many things look fair in ſpeculation which deceive us in the practice, I will, after thus expoſing my doctrines to the ray of reaſon, examine it next by the reflected light of experience; and ſurely, if this ſhews us no flaws in it, the reader and I ſhall proceed chearfully on our journey, and he will no longer conſider me as one amuſing him with a learned paradox, but as the unfolder of a great and uſeful truth.

AGAINST the common opinion, the moſt authentic records of hiſtory enable me to alledge, that though vulgar experience be oppoſite to my notions, yet that ſhortneſs of human life, which is now become common, was not ſo always, nor is yet ſo in all places. I ſhall not dwell long on what is ſaid of the great age of the antidiluvian patriarchs, I ſhall content myſelf only with a few obſervations

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that are neceſſary to my purpoſe, the truth of which cannot be drawn into diſpute. In the firſt place, let it be noted, that though men lived to be then very old, yet the ſpecies was new. The human body had been but lately taken out of the earth by its creator, and retained therefore a great deal of its primitive ſtrength. We ſay commonly, in our days, that a man who lives faſt takes pains to deſtroy his conſtitution; and on the principles of Moſes, we cannot but allow that the fabric of Adam's body muſt have been much ſtronger, and better compacted than ours; and this it was that preſerved him ſo long after he had loſt that tree of life, or rule of living, which was ſuited to his primitive ſtate. My ſecond obſervation is, that theſe patriarchs lived in another world; I mean a world otherwiſe conſtituted than ours, and after another manner; and therefore what we are told of their age, is not more incredible than a multitude of facts which experience and evidence oblige us to believe true [p]. I thirdly obſerve, that if with ſtronger conſtitutions, and in a better diſpoſed world, men lived to various ages, but moſt of them nine or ten times as long as we, there ſeems to be no repugnancy in admitting, that by great care of our conſtitutions, and our helping by art the noxious qualities of the ſeveral elements as they are now diſpoſed, men may maintain as great a relative diſtinction in the periods of their lives or deaths.

[p] Burnet Theor. Tellur. Cudworth Syſtem. Intellect.

IT is very remarkable, that not only the ſacred writers, but all the antient Chaldean, Egyptian, and Chineſe authors, ſpeak of the great ages of ſuch as lived in early times, and this with ſuch confidence, that Xenophon, Pliny, and other judicious perſons, receive their teſtimony without ſcruple. But to come down to later times; Attila, king of the Huns, who reigned in the fifth century, lived to 124, and then died of exceſs the firſt night of his ſecond nuptials, with one of the moſt beautiful princeſſes of that age [q]. Piaſtus, king of Poland, who, from the rank of a peaſant, was raiſed to that of a prince in the year 824, lived to be 120, and governed his ſubjects with ſuch ability to the very laſt, that his name is ſtill in the higheſt veneration amongſt his countrymen [r]. Marcus Valerius Corvinus, a Roman conſul was celebrated as a true patriot, and a moſt excellent perſon in private life, by the elder Cato, and yet Corvinus was then upwards of an hundred [s]. Hippocrates, the beſt of phyſicians, lived to an hundred and four [t]: but Aſclepiades, a Perſian phyſician, reached 150 [u]. Galen lived in undiſturbed health to 104 [w]. Theſe men do honour to their profeſſion.

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[q] Priſcus apud Jornandes. Bonfinius, Hiſtoire de Hongrie, Decade premiere, l. ii. p. 75. [r] Guagnini Rerum Polon. p. 64. Herbert de Fulſtin, lib. i. p. 13. & Harchnoch, lib. i. cap. 2. p. 68, &c. [s] Cato de Re Ruſtica, Cicer. de Senectut. Plin. Hiſtor. Natural. lib vii. [t] Euſeb. Chronic. Petav. Rationar. Tempor. Tom. i. p. 96. [u] Plin. Hiſtor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 14. [w] Fulgos. lib. viii. c. 14. p. 1096.

Sophocles,

Sophocles, the tragic poet, lived to 130 [x]. Democritus, the philoſopher lived to 104 [y]; and Euphranor taught his ſcholars at upwards of 100 [z]: and yet, what are theſe to Epimenides of Crete? who, according to Theopomus, an unblemiſhed hiſtorian, lived to upwards of 157 [a]. I mention theſe, becauſe if there be any truth or ſecurity in hiſtory, we may rely as firmly on the facts recorded of them, as on any facts whatever; and conſequently we have the ſtrongeſt aſſurance, that even an hundred, or an hundred and twenty, is not the utmoſt limit of human life.

But what is ſtill more to our purpoſe, it is not this, or that country, in which ſuch aged perſons are to be found; we meet with them in many, I was going to ſay in moſt climates. We have it on good authority, that in Bengal there lived a certain peaſant, who reached the age of 335; and having received alms of many infidel princes, had his penſion continued to him by the Portugueſe [b] in Cambaja. Pliny gives us an account that, in the city of Parma, there were found two of 130 years of age, three of 120, at a certain taxation, or rather viſitation, and in many cities of Italy, people much older, particu-

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[x] Euſeb. Chronic. [y] Petav. Rationar. Tempor. Tom. i. p. 96. [z] Plin. Hiſtor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 14. [a] Diogen. Laert. in vit. Epimen. [b] Barthol. Hiſt. Annat. Cent. v. Hiſt. 28. p. 46.

larly at Ariminium, one Marcus Apponius, who was 150 [c]. Vincent Coquelin, a clergyman, died at Paris in 1664, at 112 [d]. Lawrence Hutland lived in the Orkneys to 170 [e]. James Sands, an Engliſhman, towards the latter end of the laſt century, died at 140, and his wife at 120 [f]. In Sweden, it is a common thing to meet with people of above an hundred; and Rudbekius affirms, from bills of mortality, ſigned by his brother, who was a biſhop, that in the ſmall extent of twelve pariſhes, there died in the ſpace of thirty-ſeven years 232 men, between 100 and 140 years of age [g]; which is the more credible, ſince in the diet, aſſembled by the late queen of Sweden in 1713, the boldeſt and beſt ſpeaker among the deputies, from the order of peaſants, was conſiderably above an hundred [h]. Theſe accounts, however, are far ſhort of what might be produced from Africa, and North America. But I confine myſelf to ſuch relations as are truly authentic, and I aſſemble theſe inſtances not to ſhew my own learning, or to gratify my reader's curioſity, but with a view to ſatisfy him, that as the fact is certain, men may far tranſcend what are eſteemed the common bounds of life, ſo this bleſſing of longevity is not confined to one climate or region, and therefore we

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[c] Plin. Hiſtor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 29. [d] Memoirs de Paris, p. 197. [e] Buchan. Hiſt. Scot. [f] Hakewill's Apol. lib. iii. c. 1. p. 166. [g] Ol. Rudbeck. Atlantic. p. 396. [h] Memoirs. Hiſtor. 1713. Tom. ii. p. 336.

need

need not deſpair of finding out the art of prolonging life, and keeping off the decays of old age in any country.

IT is true there are countries the climates of which are ſo wonderfully healthy, as to extend human life to what is thought a very extraordinary degree, as for inſtance; in the countries beyond the Britiſh ſettlements in Florida, there died, about twenty years ago, an Indian prince who had the full uſe of his faculties to the laſt, and of his limbs alſo, to within a few years of his death, who remembered the coming of the Spaniards into thoſe parts, and conſequently muſt have been rather over than under two hundred years old. We have this account indeed from the Indians; but this does not at all leſſen its credibility, for they are people of ſuch veracity as not to have any word in their language which ſignifies a lie, and finding themſelves often impoſed upon by the Europeans, ſince they came to have an intercourſe with them, they have introduced a very ſingular phraſe, to expreſs at once their conception, and their contempt of falſhood; for when they have detected a man in telling untruths, they ſay that ſuch a one miſuſes ſpeech[1]. They mean by this, that he proſtitutes the faculty God has given him of expreſſing things as they are, by expreſſing them as they are not, and conſequently I think the relations

[1] Our author had this from a gentleman of Saltzburgh, who went over to theſe countries.

of ſuch people may be ſafely depended upon; nor ſhould I ſcruple to pay the ſame faith to their traditions, as to facts, that I would even to the beſt hiſtories.

BUT for the ſake of thoſe who prefer the writings of the antients to all other authorities, I ſhall take notice of the iſland of Cea, one of the Cyclades, now called Zia, the air of which was ſo wholeſome, that it was in danger of being over peopled; and therefore, as Strabo tells us, the inhabitants had a law amongſt them, that ſuch as had ſurvived the age of threeſcore were obliged to drink hemlock juice to deſtroy themſelves [k]. The material part of this ſtrange ſtory is confirmed to us by what we find related in other antient authors, particularly Heraclides and Ælian, whoſe authorities are cited at the bottom of the page [l]. But from comparing theſe together,

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[k] Strabo, lib. x. p. 335. "A law ſeems to have been eſta-
" bliſhed among this people, which the comic poet Menander
" applauds in the following lines:

" The Cean laws a right deciſion give,
" Who can't live happy ſhall no longer live.

" By their conſtitution it ſeems that ſuch as outlived ſixty were
" obliged to drink the juice of hemlock, that thoſe they left
" behind them might not be ſtraitened for proviſions." Such were the ſentiments of this learned hiſtorian, who, notwithſtanding expreſſes himſelf with a great deal of modeſty, and does not endeavour to impoſe his own conjecture upon his readers, for an inconteſtable fact.

[l] Heraclides de Politicis, p. m. 20. " So very wholeſome is
" the air of this iſland, that both men and women might attain

together, a doubt ariſes whether this practice of the old people in Cea was grounded an an edict made by the government, or was ſimply one of thoſe cuſtoms which, being once united to the ideas of greatneſs of ſoul, have almoſt the ſame obedience paid to them as legal ordinances. The reader may have ſeen that Strabo imagined, that there was a law by which all perſons turned of threeſcore were commanded to put themſelves to death. But he very probably might be miſtaken, for ſince the air of this iſland was very healthy, and the inhabitants long-lived, the government, by enacting and enforcing

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" there to extreme old age ; but the latter more eſpecially de-
" cline this advantage ; and that before they are reached by
" age, and its concomitant infirmities, by taking a draught of
" the juice of poppy, or of hemlock, put an end to their lives."
Ælian. var. hiſt. lib. iii. cap. 37. " It is a cuſtom amongſt the
" Ceans, that thoſe who are drawing towards old age, either at
" ſome ſplendid entertainment, or when they meet together at a
" ſolemn ſacrifice, drink the juice of hemlock, from a ſenſe that
" they might otherwiſe become uſeleſs and burthenſome to their
" country, when afflicted with the infirmities incident to the de-
" cline of life." It is a little ſtrange, that neither Tournefort, nor other modern authors, who have given us large deſcriptions of the iſland of Zia, and affect to adorn their writings with quotations from the antients, take any notice either of the preſent purity of the air, or of this odd cuſtom among its antient inhabitants. Yet in their writings we met with a kind of confirmation of it, ſince they tell us, that from the prodigious quantity of ruins it plainly appears, that in old times this country was exceedingly populous : from whence it is aſſerted that this law became neceſſary, or rather this practice came into uſe.

ſuch a law would have deprived itſelf of ſeveral vigorous and robuſt ſubjects, who might be able to do their country farther ſervice, if, as he ſuggeſts, the law had conſtrained indiſcriminately all perſons who had attained to the age of threeſcore and one, to poiſon themſelves. We may obſerve that Heraclides's words ſeem to imply a ſpontaneous, much rather than a binding law. We may alſo obſerve, that Ælian's words clearly intimate decrepid perſons, and not all ſuch as had attained the age of ſixty-one. All this tends very ſtrongly to refute Strabo's opinion. But granting it to be true, we at leaſt might ſhew that this edict of the iſland of Cea did not ſubſiſt in Tiberius's time. The proof which Valerius Maximus gives of this, may greatly contribute to diſcover the true ſtate of the affair in queſtion, for which reaſon it may be proper to weigh well in this place, the circumſtances of that author's narrative.

HE relates, that going into Aſia with Sextus Pompeius [m], and paſſing by the city of Julis, he was preſent at the death of a lady, aged about ninety. She had declared to her ſuperiors the reaſon which induced her to quit the world; and after this, ſhe

[m] Valer. Max. lib. ii. cap. 6. no. 8. in exter. whoſe authority is the greater from his being, as he tells us, an eye-witneſs. It is this that gives us certainty, not only as to all the little circumſtances attending this ſtrange affair; but as to every word the lady is reported to have ſaid; which would not have been the caſe if we had met with this in the ordinary courſe of hiſtory.

prepared to ſwallow down the poiſon; and imagining that the preſence of Pompey would do great honour to the ceremony, ſhe moſt humbly beſought him to come thither on that occaſion. He granted her requeſt, and exhorted her very eloquently, and with the utmoſt earneſtneſs to live. However, this was to no purpoſe; ſhe thanked him for his kind wiſhes, and beſought the gods to reward him, not ſo much thoſe ſhe was going to, as thoſe ſhe was quitting. "I have hitherto, ſaid ſhe, experienced only "the ſmiles of fortune, and that by an ill grounded "fondneſs for life I may not run the hazard of "ſeeing that goddeſs change her countenance to-"wards me, I voluntarily quit the light, while yet "I take pleaſure in beholding it, leaving behind "me two daughters, and ſeven grand-ſons, to re-"ſpect my memory." She then turned about to her family, and exhorted them to live in peace and unity, and having recommended the care of her houſhold, and the worſhip of her domeſtic deities to her elder daughter, ſhe, with a ſteady hand, took the glaſs that was filled with poiſon. When ſhe had it, ſhe addreſſed her prayer to Mercury [n], and having

[n] It deſerves ſome attention, that this lady who thus diſpoſed of her own life, thought it no crime againſt the gods; on the contrary, ſhe recommends herſelf to the care of Mercury, who, ſhe hoped, would uſher her to the moſt delightful part of Hades; yet Virgil tells us, Thoſe had but a bad reception in the other world, who went thither of their own accord. But as

having beſought him to facilitate her paſſage to the better part of the receptacle of departed ſpirits, ſhe, with wonderful alacrity, drank off the deadly draught. When this was done, with the ſame compoſure and ſteadineſs of mind, ſhe ſignified in what manner the poiſon wrought; how the lower parts of her body became cold and ſenſeleſs by degrees, and when the noble parts began to feel the infection, ſhe called her daughter to do the laſt office, by cloſing her eyes. As for us, ſays Valerius, who were almoſt ſtupified at the ſight of ſo ſtrange a ſpectacle, ſhe diſmiſſed us with weeping eyes. For the Romans thought compaſſion no way incompatible with fortitude.

THE ſame author acquaints us, that what was in ſame meaſure an effect of neceſſity at Cea, became from other reaſons a cuſtom at Marſeilles °; where, as he delivers to us, from his own knowledge, the magiſtrates kept conſtantly, in their own cuſtody, an efficacious poiſon, which none were allowed to uſe, till, by a memorial ſetting forth the reaſons which inclined them to quit the world, they obtained the permiſſion of the ſenate of this city, which conſiſted of ſix hundred, to make uſe of this method of leaving the light of the ſun behind them. Upon

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to chriſtians the law is clear, we are to preſerve life, becauſe it is the gift of God, and we can never think it inſupportable, till he is pleaſed to take it from us.

° Id. ibid.

their

their preſenting ſuch a petition, the ſenate examined their reaſons with ſuch an equal temper or medium as neither indulged a raſh paſſion for dying, or oppoſed a juſt deſire of quitting this earthly ſtage; whether ſuch perſons wanted to free themſelves from the perſecutions of ill fortune, or were not willing to run the hazard of loſing, in caſe they had enjoyed them, good fortune's ſmiles. Such was this ſenate's rule; they did not pretend to conſtrain any perſon to poiſon themſelves, but then they gave them the liberty to do this, if they would, whenever they judged it proper. Conſequently, no one could kill himſelf in due form, and according to law, in thoſe days at Marſeilles, unleſs the government had firſt permitted him by a public approbation, founded on the peruſal and ſerious conſideration of the motives inducing him to ſuch an action. If this was a proper place, many curious remarks might be made upon this cuſtom; but it is more to our purpoſe to ſhew what relation it bears to the ſubject we are treating.

We find that in almoſt all ages and countries a ſpirit of deſpair and diſſatisfaction has more or leſs prevailed, and taught people to anticipate what others think comes too ſoon of itſelf. To theſe furious and frantic mortals there are roads enough open to eſcape from life; and ſhall we believe that there are none by which we may avoid death for a time? To deſire this, flows from a principle of nature; to

ſeek

ſeek diſſolution, is the effects of a depravity of reaſon. What is of no value is in every body's way; the moſt contemptible fool, the lunatic fartheſt out of the reach of cure, the malefactor whom a ſenſe of his crimes, or the fears of puniſhment, have driven to the brink of diſtraction; all have this remedy in their power, and may fly to death when they will [P].

But

[P] Our author, in ſome reſpects, reſembles Seneca; he juſt flaſhes a hint, and leaves his reader to convince himſelf by reflection. There are many ways to die, and theſe are in the power of all. But how does this prove that the continuance of life is ſo great a bleſſing? Becauſe, as he gives us to underſtand, nature is not laviſh of her more precious gifts. It is in every man's power to gratify his ſenſes, and ſo lead the life of a voluptuary, but to arrive at virtue and wiſdom is not a thing of ſuch facility. We have indeed the means of doing this, but reaſoning, attention, circumſpection, muſt be employed, in order to compaſs this end. It is not poſſible to conceive an idea of excellence attainable without action and perſeverance; and therefore whatever can be ſo eaſily attained, has not any title to excellence. The rage of dying ſeems as much a kind of madneſs, as the deſire of living, when the will of God is otherwiſe, is weakneſs. But common-ſenſe teaches us that long life is a bleſſing, and revelation propoſes it as a reward. Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, lived long; the encreaſe of Job's days is attributed to a ſpecial providence; Solomon was promiſed long life on certain terms; Hezekiah was reprieved for fifteen years, in regard to his piety; and the good deeds of Tobias and Tobit lengthened their days. Under the chriſtian diſpenſation it may be obſerved, that eternal happineſs is ſignified by the phraſe of Life, and eternal miſery is ſtiled Death; the apoſtles and diſciples of Jeſus were jealous of his promiſe to John, ſuſpecting it to be an exceeding long life; and indeed this favourite apoſtle actually

But one would imagine that to extend the thread of life, to protract our journey to the grave, and inſtead of a ſhort winter night, to ſubſtitute a long ſummer's evening, to the day of our exiſtence here, is not ſo eaſy. We ought from hence to think it deſerves our regard the more, ſince the diſcovery would be ſurpriſing, and not only prolong our days, but immortalize our memories. We hear indeed many make ſlight of this, but it ariſes from a falſe magnanimity, from a fond and fooliſh notion of ſhewing a contempt for that which at the bottom is deareſt to us all. Beſides, in full health we are apt to deceive ourſelves, and to fancy ſuch reſearches not vain only, but needleſs; we are then in the purſuit of pleaſure; but when we can proceed no farther, when we are far advanced in years, or the vigour of our age is haſtily ſpent, we are too apt to reflect and to regret; we languiſh then for what ought to have occupied our cares before, and wiſh to continue drinking, though it be but the dregs of life, and thoſe imbittered too with the remembrance of draughts that had a higher reliſh. Let us own then, that it would be both wiſer and better to ſift this queſtion in due time, while we have yet abilities ſufficient to diſcover what are the rules requiſite to the preſervation of life, and ſtrength

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actually enjoyed a very ſerene and chearful old age, having ſurvived his companions, and the firſt perſecutions of the church, in which moſt of them fell.

enough

enough to come up to thoſe rules, and thereby avoid thoſe evils that make even life itſelf a burthen [q]. The owner of a houſe well ſituated, elegantly furniſhed, and affording variety of proſpects that pleaſe the eye, and chear the mind, is always intent upon keeping it in repair, and does not put off or delay ſending for maſons and carpenters, till it is on the very point of tumbling about his ears. He knows that all things will decay in time, but he knows that induſtry and art may make it a long time firſt, and therefore by wiſe precautions he ſtrengthens one weak place, ſupports another, and removes that preſſure that might endanger a third; by this means, with little labour, and without any

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[q] This is a very judicious and ſeaſonable admonition. It is in the flower of one's age that thoſe precautions muſt be taken, that keep off the infirmities which uſually attend us in our advanced years; for if we ſtay till we begin to feel ſuch infirmities, we have loſt the ſeaſon of preventing, and are fallen under the neceſſity of having recourſe to the phyſician, whoſe remedies may indeed relieve ſome of the ſymptoms for a ſhort time, but can never defend us long from thoſe incommodities that attend a ſecond childhood. Our author's ſimilitude is a very good one, and may ſerve to teach us that it is too late to think of preſerving our eyes, our teeth, or the ſenſe of hearing, when they begin to be impaired; we ſhould rather inquire how this may be done, while the organs are perfectly ſound, becauſe to preſerve a thing as it is, implies a co-operation with nature; but to reſtore what is periſhed or decayed, is ſometimes beyond her power, and frequently beyond ours. There is nothing ſurpriſing in this rule; but we muſt remember the plaineſt truths are the moſt uſeful.

clutter,

clutter, he keeps things in tolerable order, and lives in it with eaſe and decency till ſuch time as his leaſe expires, and even then quits his tenement in no rotten or deſpicable condition.

IT may perhaps, notwithſtanding all I have ſaid, be ſuggeſted, that in ſuch a caſe as this, which concerned mankind in general ſo much, and in which every man would naturally think himſelf ſo highly intereſted, if the thing were at all poſſible, this art muſt have been long ago found out, eſpecially, ſince in all ages there have been a race of men, viz. phyſicians, whoſe buſineſs it particularly was to ſtudy ſuch diſcoveries. To this I anſwer, that ſuch prejudices as theſe are the greateſt bars to ſcience; that many uſeful arts are but of late invention; and that if this was diſcovered heretofore, it might be concealed from poſterity for many political reaſons. But beſides, the fact is quite the contrary; this art was ſtudiouſly ſought by the antients, and ſome of them are ſaid to have diſcovered it. Aſclepiades the Perſian, whom I have mentioned already, was wont to declare, he looked upon a phyſician as ignorant of his profeſſion, who could not defend himſelf from diſeaſes; and this notion he ſupported by his own example, having lived in the full enjoyment of health 150 years, and was then unfortunately killed by a fall down ſtairs [r]. Mithridates, king of Pontus, pretended alſo to this ſecret, and ſo did

[r] Sab. bel. lib. x. c. 8. p. 69.

many

many others. But the beſt anſwer that can be given to all ſcruples of this kind, may be found in the following paſſage from the learned Bacon, a famous Engliſh monk, who lived in the 13th century, who diſcourſes thus upon the ſubject.

"THAT it is poſſible to prolong life, ſays he, "may be thus made evident. By nature man is "immortal, that is to ſay, was ſo formed originally, "as that he might have eſcaped dying; and, even "after he had ſinned, he could live a thouſand "years; in proceſs of time, by little and little, the "length of his life was abbreviated. Therefore it "muſt needs be, that this abbreviation is acciden-"tal, and may conſequently be either wholly re-"paired, or at leaſt in part. For if we would but "make enquiry into the accidental cauſe of this "corruption, we ſhould find it neither from heaven, "nor from ought but want of a regimen of health. "For in as much as the fathers are corrupt, they "beget children of a corrupt complexion and com-"poſition; and their children, from the ſame cauſe, "are corrupt themſelves, and ſo corruption is de-"rived from father to ſon, till abbreviation of life "prevails by ſucceſſion. Yet for all this, it does "not follow that it ſhall always be cut ſhorter and "ſhorter, becauſe a term is a ſet in human kind, "that men ſhould at the moſt of their years arrive "at fourſcore; but more is their regimen, which "conſiſts in theſe things, meat and drink, ſleep and "waking,

" waking, motion, and reſt, evacuation and reten-
" tion, air, and the paſſions of the mind. For if a
" man would obſerve this regimen from his nati-
" vity, he might live as long as his nature aſſumed
" from his parents would permit, and might be
" led to the utmoſt term of nature, lapſed from
" original righteouſneſs; which term, nevertheleſs,
" he could not paſs; becauſe this regimen does not
" avail in the leaſt againſt the old corruption of our
" parents. But it being in a manner impoſſible, that
" a man ſhould be ſo governed in the mediocrity
" of theſe things, as this regimen of health requires,
" it muſt of neceſſity be, that abbreviation of life
" came from this cauſe, and not from the corrup-
" tion of our parents only.

" Now the art of phyſic determines this regimen
" ſufficiently. But we find not either rich or poor,
" either wiſe men or fools, or phyſicians them-
" ſelves, how ſkilful ſoever, are able to perfect this
" regimen, either in themſelves or others, as is
" clear to every man. But nature is not deficient
" in neceſſaries, nor is art compleat; yea, it is able
" to reſiſt and break through all accidental paſſions,
" ſo as they may be deſtroyed, either altogether, or
" in part. And in the beginning, when men's age
" began to decline, the remedy had been eaſy; but
" now, after more than five thouſand years, it is
" difficult to aſſign a remedy.

" NEVER-

"NEVERTHELESS, wiſe men being moved from "the aforeſaid conſiderations, have endeavoured to "think of ſome ways, not only againſt the defect "of every man's proper regimen, but againſt the "corruption of our parents. Not that a man can "be preſerved to the life of Adam, or Artephius, "becauſe of prevailing corruption: But, that life "may be prolonged a century of years, or more, "beyond the common age of men now living, in "that the infirmities of old age might be retarded; "and if they could not altogether be hindered, they "might be mitigated, that life might uſefully be "prolonged, yet always on this ſide, the utmoſt "term of nature. For the utmoſt term of nature "is that which was placed in the firſt man after "ſin, and there is another term from the corruption "of every one's own parents.

"IT is no man's lot to paſs beyond both theſe "terms, but one may very poſſibly overcome the "term of his proper corruption. Nor yet do I be-"lieve that any man, how wiſe ſoever, can attain "the firſt term, though there be the ſame poſſibi-"lity and aptitude of human nature, to that term "which was in the firſt man. Nor is it a wonder, "ſince this aptitude extends itſelf to immortality, as "it was before ſin, and will be after the reſurrection. "But if you ſay that neither Ariſtotle nor Plato, "nor Hippocrates, nor Galen, arrived at ſuch pro-"longation: I anſwer you, nor at many mean truths,

" truths, which were after known to other ſtudents;
" and therefore they might be ignorant of theſe
" great things, although they made their attempt.
" But they buſied themſelves too much in other
" things, and they were quickly brought to old
" age, while they ſpent their lives in worſe and
" common things, before they perceived the ways
" to the greateſt of ſecrets. For we know that
" Ariſtotle ſaith in his predicaments, that the qua-
" drature of the circle is poſſible, but not then
" known. And he confeſſes, that all men were
" ignorant of it even to his time. But we know,
" that in theſe our days this truth is known; and
" therefore well might Ariſtotle be ignorant of far
" deeper ſecrets of nature. Now alſo, wiſe men
" are ignorant of many things, which in time to
" come, every common ſtudent ſhall know. There-
" fore this objection is every way vain [s]."

SUCH were the ſentiments of this very great and very knowing man, in times of the deepeſt ignorance and darkeſt obſcurity; and ſo thoroughly was he fixed in theſe notions, and had attained ſo many lights from the ſtudy of the Arabian writers, or rather of the Greek phyſicians labours, digeſted into the language of that nation, that he afterwards wrote an expreſs treatiſe on this ſubject [t], of which

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[s] Roger. Bacon. De Vigore Artis & Naturæ.
[t] De Prolongatione Vitæ, &c.

I ſhall have frequent occaſion to ſpeak, and therein ſuggeſted many admirable precautions for the preſervation of life, and avoiding the infirmities of old age. It is then certain, at leaſt, that we are not purſuing a ſhadow, or engaged in a cloſe ſearch after an empty chimera; there may be ſuch a thing as the art we would reach, and it is not impoſſible, that the method ſuggeſted to us by the Roman inſcription may be the great ſecret. In order to diſcern the truth of this, or to ſpeak more correctly, in order to diſcover how much of truth there is in it, we ought firſt of all to examine carefully the nature of human breath, what force it has, and what mighty feats may be expected from it, ſince the inſcription tells us the long-lived Hermippus owed his vivacity to the nouriſhment he received from the breath of girls, or if we take in the various readings of the inſcription to the breath of young people of either, or of both ſexes.

IN order to come to a thorough knowlege of this matter, we muſt conſider firſt what the breath is, and we ſhall ſoon learn, that as man lives by breath, ſo that breath is nothing more than air drawn in, and after paſſing through the lungs, thrown off again, that we may draw in freſh. I do not tye myſelf here to phyſical terms, or affect a technical manner of ſpeaking; the ſubject on which I write is of general concern, and I would therefore expreſs myſelf in a language that may be generally underſtood.

This

This air, when received into our bodies, according to ſome phyſicians, nouriſhes the lamp of life; but according to all, cauſes the circulation of the blood, and other juices, upon which health and life depend. On the other ſide, the air that we reſpire, and which we commonly call the breath, muſt, by paſſing through the lungs, be ſtrongly tinctured with the particles of that body, through which it has paſſed, and when it mixes again with the atmoſphere, muſt communicate certain qualities which the air had not before. This is ſo reaſonable, and at the ſame time ſo ſelf-evident, that I think it cannot be denied. From hence it follows, that where there are many people in one room, the air that is common to them all, muſt be ſtrongly impregnated with their breath. If therefore an old man be for many hours ſurrounded with young people, we cannot help perceiving that he muſt take in a great quantity of that air which they have reſpired, and which conſequently muſt be loaded with thoſe particles which it carried off in paſſing through their lungs.

To judge the better of this matter, let us conſider firſt the action of odours in general upon the human body; and with regard to this, a very cautious writer, the Hippocrates of our age, and who will be eſteemed the father of modern phyſic by poſterity, after having explained wherein the odour of plants conſiſts, and how exalted, he then diſcourſes thus.

"Hence we may underſtand, that the various, pe-
"culiar, and often ſurpriſing virtue of plants, may
"be widely diffuſed through the air, and carried to
"a vaſt diſtance by the winds, ſo that we muſt not
"preſently account as fables, what we find related
"in the hiſtory of plants, concerning the ſurpriſing
"effects of effluvia. The ſhade of the walnut gives
"the head-ach, and makes the body coſtive. The
"effluvia of the poppy procure ſleep. The vapour
"of the yew is reputed mortal to thoſe who ſleep
"under it; and the ſmell of bean bloſſoms, if
"long continued, diſorders the ſenſes. The ſtrong
"action of the ſun upon plants certainly raiſes at-
"moſpheres of great efficacy, by means of the ſpi-
"rits it diffuſes; and the motions of the winds
"carry them to a great diſtance. The dark ſhades
"of thick woods, where vapours are contracted, oc-
"caſion various diſeaſes, and often death to thoſe
"who reſide among them, as appears by melan-
"cholly examples in America, which abounds with
"poiſonous trees. For this ſpirit of plants is a
"thing peculiar to each ſpecies, abſolutely inimi-
"table, not producible by art. It has, therefore,
"virtues peculiar to itſelf, but ſuch as are ſtrange-
"ly agreeable to the human ſpirits [u]."

IF the ſmell of vegetables have ſuch high effects, much ſtronger ſurely may be expected from animal

[u] Boerhaav. Elementa Chemiæ.

odours;

odours; and as to the effects of human breath, we know, from experience, that they are very extraordinary. It is generally thought, that in the caſe of epidemical diſeaſes, the infection is propagaged by the breath [w], and it is ſaid to have been the practice of wicked nurſes, in the time of the plague, to catch the dying breath of their departing patients in lawn kandkerchiefs, for the very worſt of practices; and if human breath, when fetid and corrupt, is ſo potent, why ſhould we conceive it void of efficacy, when perſons are in the freeſt ſtate of health? Every body knows how grateful and refreſhing we diſcern the breath of cows to be, which is thence ſuppoſed exceedingly wholeſome; and as the fragrancy of young peoples breath, who are brought up under a proper regimen, falls little ſhort of this, one may very reaſonably ſuppoſe that it partakes of the ſame virtues.

Now to apply theſe principles to the matter at preſent under our examination. It is, I think, allowed by ſuch as are beſt acquainted with the ſecrets of nature, that there is a very briſk and lively motion in the blood of young people; to which, according to the laws of animal œconomy, health, vigour, and growth, are attributed. On the other hand, a decay of this lively motion, and in conſe-

[w] Hodges de Peſte. Proſper Alpin. Hiſtor. Natural. Ægypt.

quence thereof, a ſluggiſh circulation, which by degrees ceaſes altogether in the fineſt and ſmalleſt veſſels, is held to be the principal cauſe of the ſtiffneſs in the muſcles, which creates that wearineſs and want of force that is the great incommodity of old age. There ſeems, therefore, to be nothing ſtrained or abſurd, in conceiving that the warm, active, and balſamic particles thrown off by the lungs of young people into the air, which they reſpire, may give it ſuch a quality as, when ſucked in again by a perſon in years, ſhall communicate an extraordinary force to the circulating humours in his body, and ſo quicken and enliven them as to beſtow a kind of reflective youthfulneſs, which, by conſtant repetition, may for many years keep off and delay thoſe infirmities, to which people of the ſame age are generally ſubject. The more we conſider this doctrine, the greater care we take in comparing cauſes and effects of the like nature, and the cloſer we attend to ſuch experiments as ſeem fitteſt for the clearing up of this matter, the more we ſhall be ſatisfied of the truth of this conjecture, and the more credible this invention of Hermippus will appear.

I AM very ſenſible that there are many vain, ill-grounded, and fantaſtic notions that prevail among idle people, in relation to the breath; ſome have fancied that ſorcerers have a power of faſcinating therewith, ſuch as they breathe upon, and therefore, in many of the books which treat of witchcraft, this is

uſually thrown in as a circumſtance; neither is it a new, but an [x] old piece of ſuperſtition, which had ſubſiſted in the world many hundred years before the late affair in France, where Miſs Cadiere attributes her poſſeſſion to the breath of the prieſt [y]. We are likewiſe told of nations in the Indies, who cure all diſeaſes by breathing on ſuch as are affected with them; but this ought to be no more regarded than what we meet with in Pliny, of another Indian nation, who lived towards the ſources of the Ganges, who have no mouths, and who are nouriſhed by ſweet ſavours [z]. Theſe are either abſolute fictions, or allegorical accounts, which at this diſtance of time, and perhaps, when Pliny himſelf wrote them, were not underſtood. He gathered moſt of his facts from the Greek writers, and they frequently diſguiſed, as they ſometimes falſified their narrations. But theſe fictions, which every body can diſcern, ought not to prejudice matters of fact, of the truth of which any candid enquirer may be ſatisfied.

THERE are in Spain a race of people, or as ſome writers ſay, an order of knighthood, ſtiled Saluta-

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x Pſellus de dæmon.

y See the ſeveral factums in that famous cauſe, in which this buſineſs of faſcinating by the breath is largely treated.

z Plin. Hiſtor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 2. Cæl. Rhod. Antiq. Lect. lib. xiv. c. 21. Tne name given to the nation by theſe authors, is the Aſtomes.

dores, who pretend to cure wounds by breathing on the patient, and repeating certain prayers, which they affirm were taught by St. Elmo [a]. The church of

[a] Delrio Magic. Diſquiſit. v. ii. p. 111.

Our author ſtates this matter very truly from the writer he cites, but having heard this paſſage complained of as obſcure, in the firſt edition of this piece, it may not be amiſs to explain it. Don Antonio de Solis, in the 23d chapter of the fifth book of his Hiſtory of the Conqueſt of Mexico, having related a remarkable defeat that Hernan Cortes met with, in which he received conſiderable loſs, proceeds thus. "Upon this occa-"ſion they were ſenſible of the ſingular gift of a private ſol-"dier, Juan Catalan, who without any other medicine than a "little oil, and certain benedictions, cured their wounds in ſo "ſhort a time, that it did not look like the work of nature. The "vulgar call this kind of ſurgery, curing by Enſalmo, without "any other reaſon for it than the having heard ſome verſes "out of the Pſalms among the bleſſings: a kind of practice "which morality does not always allow, and which, however, "is ſometimes permitted after a very ſtrict examination. In "this caſe it would certainly be no preſumption to look upon "ſuch a marvellous effect as the work of heaven, the grace of "healing being one of thoſe gifts God is pleaſed ſometimes of "his mere goodneſs to confer upon man: Nor is it reaſonable "to ſuppoſe, that there ſhould be any concurrence of the evil "ſpirit, in the means of curing ſo many Spaniards, when that "enemy was endeavouring at the ſame time to deſtroy them "by the ſuggeſtions of his oracles." He relates this upon the credit of Bernal Diaz de Caſtillo, who was an eye-witneſs of the tranſaction; but Antonio de Herrera, in the 5th chapter of the 9th book, and 2d decad. of his General Hiſtory of America, affirms that this was performed by Katherine Rodriguez, and he gives us the very form of the bleſſing, and adds, that ſhe never repeated it above twice before the wounds were healed.

of Rome has condemned this fanatical practice, and ſo do I; but there is another ſomewhat related to this, which, whether nature, or chance, firſt introduced into the world, is uncertain, but which is not like ever to wear out; and that is, breathing on people in a ſwoon, in order to bring them to themſelves, which is found to be very effectual, as from natural cauſes might well be expected. Let us then, in all caſes of this nature, diſtinguiſh between reaſon and report; vulgar opinion, and the ſenſe of capable judges; the practices of mountebanks and deceivers, and deductions from phyſical principles, by men of learning and ſound ſenſe. I do not, however, deny that popular remedies have found admittance into phyſic, and ought there to be retained; for, in that as well as in chemiſtry, the effects of medicines are conſidered as experiments, upon which wiſe men reaſon, and aſſign the uſes, though there might be another ſort of people who firſt found them out; it is one thing to preſcribe rationally, and another to be lucky in cures. Hoffman and Boerhaave are the moſt different people in the world from Paracelſus and Van Helmont, who yet were very extraordinary men in their way.

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healed. Another writer reconciles theſe two authors, by aſſuring us, that Juan Catalan preſcribed the manner of curing, and that Katherine Rodriguez performed it, being eſteemed a woman of great virtue and piety, which makes this ſtory much for our author's purpoſe.

I DO not imagine that Hermippus, by reaſoning, found out this remedy againſt old age; I am inclined rather to think it found out him, that is to ſay, by vigorous effects, he was led to the cauſe, and by feeling himſelf revived by this medicine, taught the knowledge and efficacy of it. If one was diſpoſed to purſue the method of the antients, and to dreſs up this ſtory in the garb which Plato would have given it, one might relate it thus.

WHEN the blooming Thyſbe, whom the Graces adorn, and the Muſes inſtruct, converſes with the good old Hermippus, her youth invigorates his age, and the briſk flame that warms her heart, communicates its heat to his, ſo often as the lovely virgin breathes, the kindly vapours fly off full of the lively ſpirits that ſwim in her purple veins; theſe old Hermippus greedily drinks in, and as ſpirits quickly attract ſpirits, ſo they are preſently mingled with the blood of the old man. Thus the vapour, which but a moment before was expelled by the briſk beating of the heart of Thyſbe, is communicated by the æther to Hermippus, and paſſing through his heart, ſerves to invigorate his blood, ſo that almoſt without a metaphor, we may ſay, the ſpirits of Thyſbe give life to Hermippus. For what is there more eaſy to apprehend, than that the active ſpirits of this briſk and blooming maid ſhould, when received from the air, thaw the frozen juices of her aged friend, and thereby give them a new force, and a freer

freer paſſage; and thus Hermippus poſſeſſing at once the ſtrength his nature retains, and borrowing freſh ſpirits from the lovely Thyſbe, what wonder that he, who enjoys two ſorts of life, ſhould live twice as long as another man?

SUCH had been its appearance, if we had derived this fact from a Grecian ſage, and then perhaps it had been honoured with numerous commentaries, and laboured explications. But the Romans were a graver people, they contented themſelves with delivering truth in the language of truth, and thought that, like all great beauties, ſhe looked beſt in a plain dreſs.

HISTORY informs us, that very many who ſpend their time in the inſtruction, and of conſequence in the company of youth, have lived to great ages; thus Gorgias, the maſter of Iſocrates, and many other eminent perſons lived to be 108; the year before his death ſomebody demanded in his ſchool, how he had been able to ſupport ſo ſong the tedious burthen of old age; the ſophiſt replied, that he regretted nothing he had done, and felt nothing of which he could reaſonably complain; my youth, ſaid he, cannot accuſe me, nor can I accuſe my old age [b]. His ſcholar Iſocrates, in the 94th year of

[b] Plin. Hiſtor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 48. Valer. Max. lib. viii. c. 13.

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his age, publiſhed a book, and ſurvived that publication four years, in all which time he betrayed not the leaſt failure, either in memory or in judgment; but as he had long lived, ſo he died with the reputation of being the moſt eloquent man in Greece[c]. Xenophilus, an eminent Pythagorean philoſopher, taught a numerous train of ſtudents, till he arrived at the age of 105, and even then enjoyed a very perfect health, and yet he left this world before his abilities left him[d]. Nicholas Leonicenus read the phyſic lectures at Ferrara, in the laſt age, upwards of 70 years, and Langius tells us, that when he heard him, he was ſomewhat above 96, and to a perſon who aſked him, by what rule he had acquired this green old age, he anſwered, by delivering up my youth chaſte to man's eſtate[e]. Platerus tells us, that his grandfather, who exerciſed the office of a præceptor to ſome young nobleman, married a woman of thirty when he was in the hundredth year of his age. His ſon, by this marriage, did not ſtay like his father, but took him a wife when he was twenty; the old man was in full health and ſpirits at the wedding, and lived ſix years afterwards[f]. Theſe are inſtances very ſurpriſing, and ſeem to argue that

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[c] Plutarch in vit. Iſocrat.

[d] Plin. Hiſtor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 50. Valer. Max. ubi ſupra.

[e] Melch. Adam. in vit. Germ. Med. p. 141.

[f] Plateri Obſervat. lib. i. p. 233, 234.

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the company of young people is a great preſervative againſt old age.

THE celebrated Lewis Cornaro, ſo well known to the world by his elaborate treatiſes on the benefits of a ſober life, amongſt other things that he relates of himſelf, tells us this; that when he firſt began his regimen, he brought home eleven little nephews, all ſons of the ſame father and mother, all fine healthy children, whom he took the pains to educate himſelf; adding, that whenever he came from the ſenate, he diverted himſelf with the innocent mirth, harmleſs ſports, and inoffenſive tattle of the youngſters. "Some of the elder of them, ſays he, entertained me more agreeably. They underſtand muſick, often play upon the lute, accompany it with their voices, and I too frequently join my own, which is as clear as ſtrong, and as ſweet as ever it was. I have likewiſe compoſed a very diverting comedy, the ſcenes of which are diverſified with an inoffenſive variety of wit and humour, that has in it an agreeable turn of thought, and quaintneſs of expreſſion. Comedy, you know, is generally the child of youth, as tragedy is the product of old age. The latter on account of its gravity and ſerioufneſs, befitting more mature years; whilſt the former, by its gaiety of wit and humour, is more agreeable to youth. Now, if an antient Greek poet, though he was ten years younger than myſelf, was admired and celebrated

"for

" for his having wrote a tragedy, why ſhould I " be eſteemed leſs happy, or leſs myſelf, who have " compoſed and publiſhed a comedy? When I " am confident, the ſame poet, though he was ten " years younger than I am, yet had not a better " ſhare of health, or a livelier imagination [g]." I make uſe of the author's own words, becauſe Cornaro muſt, of all others, have beſt known himſelf, and the very ſpirit he ſhews in reciting theſe things, is a moſt evident proof of the ſtrength, vigour, and youthfulneſs of his conſtitution. I will, however, mention another, and that a more modern inſtance.

Francis Secardi Hongo, uſually diſtinguiſhed by the name of Huppazoli, was conſul for the ſtate of Venice, in the iſland of Scio, where he died in the beginning of 1702, when he was very near 115. This man was a native of Caſal, in the Montferrat. He married in Scio, when he was young, and being much addicted to the fair-ſex, he had in all five wives, and fifteen or twenty concubines, all of them young, beautiful women, by whom he had forty-nine ſons and daughters, whom he educated with the utmoſt tenderneſs, and was conſtantly with them, as much as his buſineſs would permit. He was never ſick; his ſight, hearing, memory, and activity, were amazing; he walked every day about eight

[g] See Cornaro's Benefits of a ſober Life, p. 33.

miles;

miles; his hair, which was long and graceful, became white by that time he was fourſcore, but turned black at an hundred, as did his eye-brows and beard at 112. At 110 he loſt all his teeth, but the year before he died he cut two large ones, with great pain. His food was generally a few ſpoonfuls of broth, after which he eat ſome little thing roaſted; his breakfaſt and ſupper, bread and fruit, his conſtant drink, diſtilled water, without any addition of wine, or other ſtrong liquor, to the very laſt. He was a man of ſtrict honour, of great abilities, of a free, pleaſant, and ſprightly temper, as we are told by many travellers, who were all ſtruck with the good ſenſe, and good humour of this polite old man[h]. The reader will eaſily diſcern, that the point upon which I chiefly inſiſt, is his having continually young company about him, eſpecially young women; for though neither himſelf, nor, for ought I know, any body elſe, ever remarked that this might contribute to the lengthening his life, yet ſo the fact might be, though not obſerved. It is indeed more for my purpoſe to collect accounts like theſe, where there is clear evidence of the fact I would eſtabliſh, before the principle, to which I refer it, was ever thought of, than to quote inſtances of a freſher date, ſince the thing might have been in my head. Theſe are inſtances that cannot be warped; I have cauti-

[h] Voyages de Tournefort, &c.

ouſly

ouſly cited my authors, and ſometimes the words of the people themſelves, ſo that I need not aſk, where I can force belief.

THE reader will not, I dare ſay, think me tedious if I ſubjoin ſome few inſtances of the ſame nature, which have either occured to me, or of which I have been informed ſince I firſt committed my thoughts upon this ſubject to the preſs. Frederick Armand de Schombergh, one of the greateſt officers in the laſt century [1], and who, by his perſonal merit, raiſed himſelf higher than any man of his time, for he was marſhal of France, generaliſſimo of the troops of the elector of Brandenburgh, duke and grandee of Portugal, duke and peer both in England and Ireland, and knight of the garter at the time of his deceaſe. Every body knows that he was killed at the battle of the Boyne, after paſſing that river on horſeback, and bringing up a regiment that had fallen into ſome confuſion, with all the vigour and ſpirit of a young man. He was then fourſcore and two, and yet very hearty, active, and capable of fatigue, nor was he more remarkable for his military accompliſhments, than for his po-

[1] Our author might have theſe particulars from ſome German memoirs of marſhal Schomberg; but wherever he had them, the facts are very well known, and for this reaſon it ſeems unneceſſary to load the page with citations to prove them.

lite and eaſy behaviour, he was wont to ſay, that when he was young he converſed with old men to gain experience, and when he was old he delighted in the company of young men to keep up his ſpirits. This is the reaſon that I mention him, for he was in nothing more diſtinguiſhed than by his diſpoſition. His perſon was agreeable, he made a fine figure on horſeback, he danced and walked well, and was ſo far from feeling any of the incommodities of age, either in body or mind, that in point of dreſs, exerciſe, and ſprightly humour, he came nothing ſhort of the company he kept. The winter before he was killed in Ireland, he was walking in the Park with abundance of young officers about him, and being met by a grave Engliſh nobleman, he could not help telling the marſhal, that he was ſurpriſed to ſee him in ſuch company; "why ſo, my lord, replied Schomberg, don't you know that a good general always makes his retreat as late as he can?" It will, I preſume, be readily allowed, that his keeping young company might contribute not a little to preſerving his good temper, and his gaiety of mind; but for my part, I go a little farther, and cannot help perſuading myſelf that it had an influence on his health too, whether he perceived it or not. As a general and commander in chief, for upwards of forty years, he muſt, in conſequence of the encouragement he gave them, have been ſurrounded continually with a parcel of hale wholeſome young fellows, and as theſe are not commonly ſparing of

their words, where they may ſpeak freely, he muſt from thence have derived all the advantages of a balmy ſalutiferous atmoſphere compoſed from the mixture of their breaths, which very probably might have defended him from the inconveniences of age for many years longer, more eſpecially as he was temperate in his diet, chearful in his humour, and conſtant in his exerciſes, of which riding and walking were the chief.

THOUGH marſhal Schomberg was a German, yet as he was an Engliſh duke, he puts me in mind of another illuſtrious perſon exactly of his own temper and age, and who died but two years before him; this was the celebrated poet Waller, who, at upwards of fourſcore, wrote with all the fire and vivacity of a riſing genius [k]. It is from Mr. St. Evremont, that I learn his great love for the company of young

[k] In a letter written by Mr. St. Evremont to the famous Mr. de la Fontaine, we have the following paſſage: "Mr. Waller, "whoſe loſs we regret, carried the full vigour of his wit to the "age of fourſcore and two." A very little before his death he made a journey to Windſor, to conſult Sir Charles Scarborough about a pain he had in his leg. I come, ſaid he, to you, as to an old friend, as well as a phyſician, to aſk what this ſwelling means? why, to deal plainly, ſaid Sir Charles, your blood will run no longer. At this Mr. Waller was ſo little ſurpriſed, that he repeated a paſſage from Virgil applicable to the occaſion, and ſoon after paraphraſed it in theſe lines of his own.

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young people, and more eſpecially of the ladies. He had been remarkable in his youth for being a great admirer rather than a general lover of the ſex, for his morals were unblemiſhed, and his conduct, at once, as chaſte and as gallant as his verſes. He loved to ſun himſelf as it were in the beams of beauty, and was never ſo happy, even at fourſcore, as when in the midſt of a circle of the youngeſt and fineſt women about the court; neither was this an impertinent affectation, ſpringing from the remembrance

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The ſeas are quiet when the winds give o'er,
So calm are we when paſſions are no more,
For then we know how vain it were to boaſt
Of fleeting things, ſo certain to be loſt:
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes
Conceal that emptineſs which age deſcries.

The ſoul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new light, thro' chinks that time has made;
Stronger by weakneſs, wiſer, men become
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That ſtand upon the threſhold of the new.

It is a little ſtrange, that our author mentions the authority of Mr. St. Evremont, and yet makes no uſe of his example who lived to a great age, and preſerved his ſenſes to the laſt; but very probably he thought it a good reaſon to leave him out, becauſe he was not remarkable for affecting young company, and was for many years ſubject to great infirmities, which were probably the effects of a very free, or rather luxurious, way of living.

of paſt pleaſure, for the ſame ſprightly wit and innocent livelineſs of converſation, attended him even then, ſo that his company was as much ſought as if he had not been ſo old by half a century. Upon this inclination of his he was complimented by a French poet, in a ſhort copy of verſes, ending with theſe two fine lines,

"Amidſt the young and fair you ſpend your hours,
"Nor think of winter, whilſt amongſt the flowers."

I NEED not repeat the application, for though, in all probability, it was the pure efforts of his temper that led him to this converſation, and kept him continually in this gay train, yet it might have an effect upon his conſtitution too, and perhaps he might find himſelf more chearful, and at eaſe from theſe converſations, though he did not enter into the philoſophical, or rather phyſical reaſon, which I have aſſigned for it. We ſee what wonders are done by the baths at Aix-la-Chapelle, the waters of the Spa, and the wells of Pyrmont, in removing hyſteric and ſplentic complaints; but, after all, is it the baths and the waters that work the cure entirely, or have not the company, diverſions, and exerciſe, a conſiderable influence in recovering ſuch patients? If they had not, methinks it would be a difficult thing to aſſign the reaſon why the ſame perſons return to them ſo frequently, they know the benefit

benefit they receive, or rather they feel it, and therefore are the leſs curious in their enquiries whence that benefit ſprings.

BUT the laſt example I have to mention comes cloſer to the point, and therefore I ſhall enter upon it without any introduction. I have it from unqueſtionable authority, that a certain nobleman of France, whom I am not at liberty to name, made uſe of the ſecret of our Hermippus, and keeping conſtantly in his houſe, under the pretence of a charitable care of their education, ten or twelve young girls, in whoſe company he was continually, and maintained himſelf thereby, in a full flow of health and ſpirits, till he was upwards of ninety. It is ſaid he might have ſurvived ſome years longer, had not a ſcruple ſtruck into his head that there was ſomething of irreligion in this practice, upon which he diſmiſſed his guardian angels, fell into a languiſhing ſtate, and in a very few months died, as much for the want of their breaths as his own. How he came by this method, whether by information, obſervation, or intuition, I cannot ſay, but the fact is both certain and well known. The famous marſhal Villars was taken notice of for ſhunning the company of perſons of like years, and affecting to live with the young people, which he was once told, proceeded from his deſire of forgetting that he was become old. To which he anſwered, with great ſpirit, that he would never put it in the power of his enemies to

remember it. He kept his word perhaps with too great vigour, for in his laſt campaign, though he began to feel the infirmities of age, yet he diſſembled them as much as poſſible, and gave ſuch an inſtance of vivacity in attacking ſome ſquadrons of imperial horſe, with the king of Sardinia's guards, that the polite monarch could not help telling him, he loſt the experienced general in beholding all the ardour of a young officer: to which the marſhal replied "that lamps were apt to ſparkle when they were expiring;" and indeed this was his laſt exploit in the field. But to return to my ſubject, which I ſhall endeavour to place in ſuch a light as that truth may derive ſome advantage from ornament, without being eclipſed, either by unnatural or unneceſſary fiction[1].

Whatever

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[1] It may poſſibly contribute to the ſupport of our author's arguments, if we mention two inſtances that have occured amongſt ourſelves ſince the publication of this book. The field marſhal earl of Stair was very remarkable for preſerving a great flow of ſpirits, and good humour, in extreme old age, and not leſs ſo for always affecting young company, with whom he was conſtantly gay and chearful; and as he was never happier than amongſt his boys, as in his familiar way he was wont to call them, ſo they were never more delighted than when they had the honour to attend him. The other inſtance comes cloſer to our author's ſyſtem. All the world hath heard of Mr. Calverley, who kept a boarding-ſchool for young ladies in Queen Square. He maintained his health, his vigour, his chearfulneſs, his good ſenſe, and his good humour, to upwards of a hundred, and would ſay merrily, when he heard men forty years younger than himſelf

Whatever is probable, is credible, and whatever may be ſuppoſed without abſurdity, an author has a right to ſuppoſe, in the ſupport of his hypotheſis; this I hope will ſecure me from cenſure, and the rather becauſe I intend it for the entertainment of the reader. My ſubject is chearful, and my argument can have no weight with people that are not chearful; the firſt of our faculties that declines is the fancy, and therefore he who endeavours to keep old age at a diſtance muſt enliven that, and ſhew that he has the poets power of creation, by raiſing an appearance of that paradiſe, which had been the lot of man during his reſidence below, if not forfeited by his own folly.

I WILL ſuppoſe then of our Hermippus, that he was a tutor or director of a college of virgins, for ſince the inſcription tells us not what he was, we may be allowed the freedom of a rational conjecture. This college of virgins, I conceive founded purely for the ſake of education, and thereby affording a quick and conſtant ſucceſſion of little maids, from the age of between five and ſix, to thirteen and

himſelf, coughing, groaning, and complaining; "what a troubleſome thing it is to be plagued with old folks!" This gentleman after he parted with his ſchool, did not ſurvive long, and it is ſaid he was himſelf of opinion, that he might not only have lived, but have enjoyed life, ſome years longer, if he had not quitted buſineſs.

fourteen. I imagine it might be requiſite for the health, as well as proper inſtruction of theſe young ladies, that they roſe pretty early in the morning, and this in all ſeaſons of the year. In the ſpring and ſummer they might be allowed to walk and enjoy the refreſhing pleaſure of rural proſpects, but always in the company of their director, who perhaps was obliged to entertain them during the walk, with ſeaſonable and lively ſtories. If this ſeeming extraordinary mode of education diſguſt perſons of a nice and prudiſh taſte, give me leave to obſerve, that the Greeks uſed it of old, and that it is ſtill practiſed by all the Eaſtern nations. Mileſian, or Arabian tales, in which a vivacity of imagination appears, with here and there a ray of ſound judgment, ſuit beſt with tender minds, and eſpecially with feminine underſtandings. Women are remarkably governed by example, or to make uſe of a modern phraſe, by the faſhion. Why therefore ſhould they not be inſtructed by example? There is leſs difference than moſt people imagine between real and feigned ſtories. They differ but as morning and evening ſhadows, the one is the faint picture of what has paſſed, the other is a lively repreſentation of what may poſſibly come. In all other reſpects they are alike. The ſtory of Alexander and Roxana, is now as much a dream as any in the Perſian tales. One advantage that ideal relations have over ſtories grounded upon facts, is, that we may contrive them ſo as to avoid improper circumſtances,

which

which cannot frequently be diſpenſed with in reſpect to the latter, but at the expence of truth. With ſuch diſcourſes, after their early devotions were over, the fair pupils might be entertained in winter mornings, and the day be thus opened with a free, chearful, and kindly ſpirit, alike agreeable to his lovely wards, and grateful to the good old man.

AFTER this morning exerciſe, I ſuppoſe that Hermippus his and female pupils, retire in order to bathe, to dreſs, and to adorn themſelves, all which I look upon as no leſs neceſſary for the old man, than fit and convenient for the young virgins. Every body knows, that the antients were remarkably fond of baths and of unctions, eſpecially for men in years; and the Arabian phyſicians preſcribe them once in a week or ten days, and order ſome hot and well ſpiced meat to be eaten after uſing them; but to be ſure waſhing, cleanſing, and keeping the body neat, as they tend to make old men pleaſant and agreeable to ſuch as converſe with them, ſo they contribute not a little to their own eaſe, and to the preſerving that ſuppleneſs in the limbs which is frequently attacked by old age. On the other hand, elegance in dreſs, and great niceneſs about their bodies, is of very high conſequence to the preſervation of ſuch a temper in theſe young maids, as is fit to make them uſeful in that way of which we are ſpeaking. About noon, after all this exerciſe was quite over, I ſuppoſe Hermippus meets his

maidens with as much chearfulneſs as his conſtitution will admit, while they receive him with that ſprightlineſs that is natural to theirs. A ſhort converſation ſhould precede a light well-choſen and wholeſome entertainment, of which all feeding freely, but not to fulneſs, ſeaſon the neceſſary buſineſs of recruiting the body with ſuch ingenious and diverting ſtories, as may amuſe and recreate the mind. After the repaſt; muſic, vocal, and inſtrumental, and then a walk, or if the weather will not permit that, ſome breathing exerciſe within doors, to ſuch a degree as may excite colour, but without forcing a ſweat.

THE evening ſhould, among ſuch company, be chiefly dedicated to diverſion, the ladies, and eſpecially the youngeſt, ſhould be indulged in all the little innocent paſtimes that contribute either to the exerciſe of their limbs, or the improvements of their wits, and theſe ought to take their turns according to the rule preſcribed by their director. For inſtance, after blindman's buff; hoop and hide, or hunting the hare, there ſhould ſucceed queſtions and commands, pictures and motto's, riddles, or ſomething of the like ſort; and laſt of all, two or three of the eldeſt might gently lead them, by a few grave ſtories, into a fit diſpoſition for their evening devotions; after which they might retire to their dormitory, each having her proper cell, but all open

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at the top, as alſo the director's apartment at the upper end. In a college like this, with ſuch company, and under ſuch regulations, where all the pupils are chaſte as Diana's nymphs, freſh as the ſpring, ſweet as the ſummer, and harmleſs as the winter, ever full of life and ſpirits, free from diſeaſes, cares, or diſtractions of mind, eaſy in their tempers, affable in their manners, fond of obliging, grateful when obliged; I can ſcarce imagine that any man could ſpend his time more agreeably than Hermippus, live freer from a ſenſe of ſorrow, or more remote from the ſhadow of death. By this regimen, he might be provided with an almoſt continual refreſhment from their odoriferous breaths, and never loſe their company, but at ſeaſons proper for them and for him. His blood would not only receive conſtant ſupplies of ſpirits from the artificial atmoſphere, conſtituted by this contrivance, but his genius alſo would be kept briſk and lively, by a perpetual intercourſe with perſons in the moſt active period of life. Secluded in ſuch a retreat from all the hurry, all the diſorder, all the accidents that attend a life of buſineſs, he would eaſily eſcape diſquiet and fatigue, removed from all the views of profit, pomp, and pleaſure; he would never feel the cruel diſturbance of any reſtleſs paſſion, the deſire of getting would never torment him, he would never be perplexed with the fears of loſing, if his heart was at any time touched with pain, it muſt be at the parting with a ſcholar, and even this would admit

admit of ſome relief, from the pleaſure afforded him by receiving a new diſciple. At leaſt, theſe are the comforts I have figured to myſelf, attendant on ſuch a ſtate, and ſuch of my readers as are bleſſed with more vigorous fancies, may conceive him in poſſeſſion of ſtill higher and more exquiſite bleſſings.

I AM ſenſible it may be objected, that the whole of this ſuppoſition is abſolutely arbitrary, that amongſt the Romans, there never was any ſuch college [m] as this under the direction of any man, or, for ought appears, in any other nation. But then it is to be conſidered, that I have ſo ſtated it. If Hermippus was really nouriſhed by the breath of women, as I have already ſhewn it is very reaſonable to believe he might, we muſt then conceive to ourſelves ſome occupation, ſome way of life in which he might eaſily and conſtantly receive this comfortable medicine; and if the account I have given be ſo far probable in itſelf, and free from abſurdity, as to convey clearly to the reader's mind ſuch an idea as I would willingly have it, it is not in the leaſt material, whether there ever was ſuch a college, for that comes not at all within my aſſertion, it is ſufficient for my purpoſe, if ſuch a college there might have been. Another reader may, perhaps, deviſe ſome eaſier, clearer, and more probable method of inter-

[m] Except it may be the Puellæ Fauſtinianæ, of whom we find ſome mention made in the ancient incriptions.

preting

preting this inſcription; if he does, I ſhall not diſpute with, or envy him the fertility of his invention. My account of the matter ſerves to help the notion I have formed of the poſſibility of the thing, and therefore, as a mathematician draws his figures in order to explain the propoſitions he lays down, ſo I have exhibited this example, to illuſtrate the doctrine that I would recommend.

ONE may likewiſe ſuggeſt, that moſt of the examples hitherto alledged of the long life of ſuch as have taught young people, do not reach the point I have advanced, in as much as they all confeſſedly belong to young men. Yet, if this objection affects what I have delivered, the credit of the inſcription remains ſtill untouched, ſince ſome underſtand it of boys, though I incline to interpret it of girls, for reaſons that will hereafter occur. But whoever makes this objection, muſt admit, at the time of making it, that there is an extraordinary efficacy in the breath of young men, which, duly conſidered, will be found a very great conceſſion in my favour; ſince, if there be any ſuch efficacy in the breath of young men, no reaſon can be aſſigned why my ſuppoſition ſhould be held leſs reaſonable. All things, therefore, that make in general in favour of human breath, or in favour of the breath of young people, tend to ſtrengthen and ſupport what I have laid down. As to thoſe particular circumſtances which render female breath preferable, it lies upon me to

aſſign

aſſign them, and this I ſhall do in its proper place; in the mean time, give me leave to remark one thing more in favour of my fictitious hiſtory of the College of Virgins, viz. that the greateſt men have thought it allowable to introduce ſuch deſcriptions wherever they have judged them requiſite, or agreeable to the ſubject of which they were treating. The learned Sir Thomas More laid down a ſyſtem of politics in his Utopia [n]; Barclay has written an ingenious hiſtory in his Argenis; and the great chancellor Bacon has exhibited the moſt beautiful of all fictions in his hiſtory of the New Atlantis [o]; which hiſtory, if I miſtake not, gave birth to the Royal Society in England.

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[n] There are ſome diſputes about the firſt edition of this book; the famous Mr. Maittaire fancied there was one in the year 1516; but he is miſtaken, the firſt edition of it bore the following title, De optimo republicæ ſtatu, deque nova inſula Utopia, Thomæ Mori libri duo, quibus prefiguntur epiſtolæ Deſiderii Eraſmi, Gul. Budæi, Petri Ægidii, ac in fine adjuncta Hieron. Buſlidii epiſtola. Baſileæ. Joan. Froben. 1518, in 4^to^. and has been printed very often ſince. It was tranſlated into Engliſh by Ralph Robinſon, in 1557, which tranſlation biſhop Burnet miſtook for the author's own; however, he ventured to make another tranſlation in 1683, and a very good one it is. It was tranſlated into Italian in 1548, but the author of that verſion is not known. There have been three tranſlations in French, of which that by Sorbire is eſteemed the beſt.

[o] The author is right enough in his obſervation, Abraham Cowley borrowed his notion of a philoſophic college from lord Bacon's Atlantis; and from Mr. Cowley's notion of ſuch a college, the Royal Society had its beginning.

BUT

BUT I muſt not conceal two other objections of far greater weight, that have been made to this doctrine of mine, by the ingenious Mr. Nunning [p]. If, ſays that learned perſon, your ſyſtem be founded in truth, if there be really any ſuch vigour and efficacy in the breath of women, or even of young women, how comes it to paſs that thoſe men have not attained to any extraordinary age, who are known to have had the greateſt advantages poſſible in this way? Upon this, he puts two queſtions, why, ſays he, did not Solomon, whoſe wives and concubines were ſo numerous, and who undoubtedly were young, beautiful, and kept entirely from other men; why did not this Solomon, continues he, live beyond the ordinary age of man; whereas, the ſcripture tells us, that he did not reach that which is common in our times? this is the firſt objection, and it muſt be owned, that Mr. Nunning has put it very modeſtly, for Solomon had, beſide this, many other advantages. He was undoubtedly a great philoſopher, an excellent naturaliſt, and underſtood perfectly the art of conducting life, to which we may add, that ſome have believed him an exquiſite anatomiſt, phyſician, and chemiſt; ſo that if he died before ſeventy, who was poſſeſſed of ſuch extenſive power, ſuch immenſe riches, and

[p] This gentleman is canon of Vreden, and is now publiſhing in Germany, in quarto, a work entitled, Monumenta Monaſterienſia, which is to contain the Elogies of all the great men who have been natives of the biſhoprick of Munſter.

ſuch wiſdom as never centred in another man; what reaſon is there to ſuppoſe that ſuch as are infinitely below him in all reſpects, ſhould require the knowlege of that which was indubitably hid from him? this is the caſe ſtated fairly, freely, and fully, for we mean not to cheat or deceive our readers, but to inform and ſatisfy them; our endeavour is not to give an air of veracity to our own opinion, but to rectify our own notions by the ſtandard of truth.

MR. Nunning's ſecond objection, is fetched from the ſeraglios of the Turkiſh monarchs. Why, ſays he, do not the great lords of the Ottoman empire, who have ſuch numbers of young and fine women always in their power, live to a great age? or rather, why ſince they have this balſam of life continually in their poſſeſſion, are they ſhorter lived than other men? and that too in a country where there are more long lived people than in many others? this excellent perſon might have fortified alſo this objection, by extending it to the Shâhs of Perſia, the Hans of Tartary, the great Moguls, and all the other Eaſtern princes, who, in this reſpect, enjoy to the full the ſame advantages with the Turkiſh ſultans. I am not afraid of giving the utmoſt weight to theſe ſuggeſtions, becauſe if I can fairly and clearly refute them, my doctrine muſt appear, if not abſolutely certain, much more probable, at leaſt, and much more agreeable to truth, than if theſe objections had never been mentioned. I do indeed admit,

mit, that both are very plauſible, both ſeem directly deſtructive of my ſyſtem; but if, notwithſtanding all this, I am, as I think I am, in a capacity of ſhewing that they do not at all affect what I have advanced, but that, on the contrary, when duly conſidered, they fortify it extremely, then I hope the reader will attend, with the greater ſatisfaction, to ſome additonal arguments that I ſhall offer in ſupport of this notion. It is the great beauty of truth, that the more we examine it, the more different lights in which we place it, the more pains we take in turning and twiſting it, the clearer we perceive its excellency, and the better the mind is ſatisfied about it; whereas falſhood, however fair it may appear when dreſſed out to advantage, or ſet in a falſe light, yet it never can long ſtand the teſt of a ſtrict and unbiaſſed enquiry.

THE hiſtory of Solomon is very largely recorded in the ſacred writings, and the circumſtances therein laid down, enable us to give ſuch an account of the manner of that prince's life, that we need be under no ſort of ſurprize at the earlineſs of his death. He was, it is true, the wiſeſt man that ever lived, of which he has left us very noble and convincing teſtimonies in his writings. He was a great politician, excellently ſkilled in the arts, and a perfect maſter of the polite literature of thoſe times; but with all this, we ſee that he was a very voluptuous man. Science and pleaſure engroſſed him by turns,

he would have puſhed his reſearches beyond the bounds of human nature; and when he found himſelf checked, he then began to complain of the burthen of knowlege, and the tireſomeneſs of ſuch enquiries. To deliver himſelf from theſe anxieties, to calm his cares, to drown his doubts, and bury his apprehenſions in oblivion, he had recourſe to ſenſual delights, having conſtantly in his ſeraglio a multitude of fine women, amounting, as the author of the book of Kings tells us, to ſeven hundred wives, who were princeſſes, and three hundred concubines [q]. With theſe he led an effeminate, laſcivious, and profligate life. Theſe women were of all nations, Egyptians, Moabites, Amonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites, and each endeavoured to recommend herſelf to his favour by all the ſtudied arts of luxury [p]. Amongſt ſuch a heterogenous maſs of females, all corrupt in their morals, all different in their cuſtoms, all filled with jealouſy and emulation of each other: what reaſon was there to hope either for quiet or for health?

IN the deſcription we have given of the life of Hermippus, we have uſed our utmoſt endeavour to ſhew the means by which this ſovereign medicine of which we are diſcourſing operates, and how it is to be employed. We ſuppoſe our old man to be of a

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[p] 1 Kings xi. 3. [q] Ibid. v. 1.

gentle,

gentle, uniform, and pleaſant diſpoſition, always eaſy, always content, and ſurrounded by numbers of blooming virgins, too young to have either their bodies, or their thoughts tainted; and we ſuppoſe theſe perſons ſpending their time together in chaſte and innocent amuſements. But the life of Solomon was the very reverſe of this, his thoughts were in a perpetual hurry, his mind in conſtant agitation; one day deeply plunged in philoſophical and metaphyſical contemplations; the next ſunk in ſceptical doubts, and gloomy reflections; the third giving a looſe to his pleaſures, and abandoning himſelf without reſtraint, not only to the lewdneſs of his own deſires, but to the wilder extravagancies of a multitude of vicious women. All this we learn not only from hiſtories of indubitable authority, but from his own writings: there we ſee the ſtruggles of his heart; there we ſee his reſtleſs love of pleaſure; his intemperate thirſt after knowlege, and in conſequence of all this his agonies and diſquiet. Is there any likeneſs between theſe two characters? can one imagine that the converſation of women, in ſuch a diverſity of circumſtances, ſhould have the ſame effect on Solomon and Hermippus? or can it enter into the head of any man, bleſſed with a ſound underſtanding, that this, or any other medicine, could defend Solomon from old age, conſidering the courſe he held? was there ever a man that ſtudied the prolongation of life with more aſſiduity than Solomon laboured to ſhorten it? did he not harraſs his ſpirits with intricate and

perplexed enquiries? did he not vex himſelf with perpetual queſtions about preſent and future felicity, which rendered it impoſſible for him to enjoy it? Did he not, by indulging his paſſions, ſcatter the ſeeds of deſtruction? and did he not, by his luxury and intemperance, cheriſh and cultivate them, till they at laſt, as they always do, diſturbed the frame of his mind, as well as ruined his conſtitution? What wonder then that Solomon was no long-liver?

WHAT I have ſaid, will, I dare ſay, ſatisfy the worthy gentleman who propoſed this doubt, and every reader who ſeriouſly conſiders it. The objection takes Solomon for a perſon in that very ſituation wherein I would place Hermippus; but I have ſhewn this to be altogether groundleſs. The objection takes it for granted, that I look upon the breath of young women to be a univerſal medicine; whereas I aſſert only, that the breath of young virgins in a particular way, may defend a perſon againſt old age, who, by temperance and moderation, defends himſelf againſt diſeaſes. But, beſides what I have mentioned, I have yet ſomething more to ſay, as to Solomon, which I might have offered before, and which would have excuſed me from examining his caſe at all, if I had in the leaſt inclined to have ſheltered myſelf under any ſuch ſubterfuge.

ALL the accounts we have of Solomon ſuppoſe him to be under a particular diſpenſation, and that he had

had recourſe immediately to God himſelf, at leaſt twice in his life; ſo that this man was not in the ſame ſituation with others, and therefore not fit to be conſidered as an example. I might puſh this further ſtill, by obſerving, that God was pleaſed to promiſe him length of days, if he imitated the righteouſneſs of his father David; ſo that he had a much better medicine in his power than human wiſdom could ſupply him with, and yet he knew not how to uſe it. The ſcriptures ſay, That when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other Gods [r]. Oldneſs is here uſed in the ſenſe in which I underſtand it, that is with reſpect to the condition, and not to the years of life, for in that ſenſe Solomon was not old when he died, ſince he exceeded not ſixty-ſeven. The plain meaning, therefore, of this text muſt be, that when his vices had broken his conſtitution, and weakened his faculties, then theſe women to whom he gave himſelf up, drew him to idolatry; and theſe nurſes of his ſecond childhood induſtriouſly taught him to fall. Drawn by their deluſions, he ſacrificed both titles to long life, viz. that which temperance gave him by the law of nature, and that which by an extraordinary revelation he received from God himſelf. For this, no doubt included that, ſince we cannot ſuppoſe that God promiſed long life to Solomon

[r] 1 Kings v. 4.

without an implied condition, that he attended to the natural means for attaining it; the laws and promiſes of God muſt be always rational, becauſe they are made and propounded to reaſonable creatures.

AFTER examining this objection ſo fully, it will give me much leſs trouble to clear up the other. For what can there be more contrary to, or irreconcileable with the doctrine I have laid down, than the lives led by Eaſtern monarchs? all writers agree, that to give ſtrength and firmneſs to the body, there is nothing ſo neceſſary as chaſtity in green years. The Germans, as Tacitus tells us, were wont to preſerve themſelves from women, till they were thirty at leaſt, and this he aſſigns as the principal cauſe of their robuſtneſs, courage, and long life [s]. Ages before his time, the Spartans had formed the ſame notions, led thereto by reaſon and experience [t]; but with regard to the Aſiatic princes, they never know what purity of manners, and chaſtity of mind mean, they are corrupted in their mother's nurſeries, and the diſſolute temper of the father prevents the virtuous education of the ſon. While they are yet ſtriplings, they are permitted the uſe of women, in order to enervate their minds, and when they grow up, an effeminate luxury becomes the principal buſineſs of their lives. Amongſt ſuch men as theſe

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[s] De Morib. German. [t] Plutarch. in Lacon.

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ſhall we look for health or long life? Is this agreeable to the rules of wiſdom or ſcience, I mean to the natural dictates of good-ſenſe, or to the maxims of phyſic? If not, where lies the ſtrength of the objection?

But beſides all this, what if there be ſtill a ſhorter, plainer, or more deciſive anſwer, which is, that we can never properly judge in this caſe, becauſe experience teaches us that theſe princes ſeldom or never die a natural death. In the field they are expoſed to the common chances of war, and if we look into the Turkiſh, Perſian, or Indian ſtories, we ſhall find at leaſt a third part of their monarchs have fallen in battle. Again, conſider them in their civil capacity, and from the very nature of an arbitrary deſpotic government, you muſt be ſenſible that they are continually liable to popular inſurrections, in which many of their princes have likewiſe fallen. But if you purſue them further, and follow them into the receſſes of their private life, as you will perceive them to be no way happier, ſo you will find them much leſs ſafe than any of their ſubjects. The intrigues and jealouſies of their many wives, muſt always expoſe ſuch princes to a multitude of dangers, eſpecially in countries where poiſons are very common, and where the moſt dexterous uſe of them is common too.

BUT what if the ſacred hiſtory, which furniſhed the firſt and ſtrongeſt objection, contains another hiſtory, which is the fulleſt, cleareſt, and moſt ſatisfactory proof that can be offered in favour of the opinion I eſpouſe? The caſe I mean is, that of king David in his old age, which I ſhall ſtate fully and fairly. It is ſaid, that king David grew old and ſtricken in years, his natural heat decaying to ſuch a degree, that no addition of cloaths could give him heat; in this diſtreſs the phyſicians adviſed him to the very remedy which I recommend. "Let there be ſought, ſaid they, for my lord the "king, a young virgin, and let her ſtand before "the king, and let her cheriſh him, and let her "lie in his boſom, that my lord the king my get "heat." Accordingly Abiſhag, the Shunamite, was brought to the king, and of her we read that ſhe was a damſel very fair, that ſhe cheriſhed the king, and miniſtred to him; but the king knew her not. [u]. This is the ſtory, as it lies in the book, and from hence I think it plainly appears that the phyſicians of thoſe times were well acquainted with the efficacy of this remedy, and underſtood how age might be benefited by youth.

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[u] 1 Kings i. 1. See alſo the Commentaries of Munſter, Grotius, &c. among the larger critics, who all interpret theſe paſſages of ſcripture in this way.

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THE famous monk Roger Bacon, whom I have cited before, in his treatiſe of the Cure of Old Age, has a large chapter upon this ſubject; though, as he wrote to a pope, and in an age no ways favourable to him or his diſcoveries, he thought proper to conceal what he admits to be the moſt efficacious medicine it was in his power to preſcribe, under ſuch dark and obſcure terms, that few I believe have reached his true meaning. It may, perhaps, be ſuſpected that I have deceived myſelf, and that having this notion in my head, I have found in Bacon's [w] works things that were never there; for which reaſon, as well as becauſe I can offer nothing more curious, or more pertinent of my own, I will cite as much of his book as relates to this ſubject, and leave it to my reader to decide how far I do him juſtice by my comment.

"I HAVE read many volumes of the wiſe, I find "few things in phyſic which reſtore the natural "heat, weakned by diſſolution of the innate moiſ-"ture, or increaſe of a foreign one. But certain "wiſe men have tacitly made mention of ſome "medicines, which is likened to that which goes "out of the mine of the noble animal; they affirm, "that in it there is a force and virtue which re-

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[w] R. Bacon, De Prolongatione Vitæ, c. xii.

"ſtores

" ſtores and encreaſes the natural heat. As to its " diſpoſition, they ſay, it is like youth itſelf, and " contains an equal and temperate complexion; " and the ſigns of a temperate complexion in men " are, when their colour is made up of white and " red, when the hair is yellow, inclining to red- " neſs and curling. According to Pliny, when " the fleſh is moderate, both in quality and quan- " tity; when a man's dreams are delightful; his " countenance chearful and pleaſant, and when " in his appetite of eating and drinking he is mode- " rate. This medicine, indeed, is like to ſuch a com- " plexion; for it is of a moderate heat, its fume is " temperate and ſweet, and grateful to the ſmell; " when it departs from this temperature, it departs " ſo far from its virtue and goodneſs. This medi- " cine doth therefore temperately heat, becauſe it " is temperately hot; it therefore heals, becauſe it " is whole. When it is ſick, it makes a man ſick. " When it is diſtempered, it breeds diſtempers, and " changeth the body to its own diſpoſition, becauſe " of the ſimilitude it hath with the body.

" FOR the infirmity of a brute animal rarely " paſſeth into man, but into another animal of the " ſame kind. But the infirmity of a man paſſeth " into man, and ſo doth health, becauſe of like- " neſs. Know, moſt gracious prince! that in this " there is a great ſecret. For Galen ſaith, that " whatever is diſſolved from any thing, it muſt of " neceſſity

" neceſſity be aſſimulated to that thing, as is ma-
" nifeſt in diſeaſes paſſing from one to another;
" ſuch as weakneſs of the eyes, and peſtilential diſ-
" eaſes. This thing hath an admirable property,
" for it doth not only render human bodies ſafe
" from corruption, but it defends alſo the bodies of
" plants from putrefaction. This thing is ſeldom
" found, and although ſometimes it be found, yet
" it cannot commodiouſly be had of all men. And
" inſtead of it, the wiſe do uſe that medicine which
" is in the bowels of the earth, complete and pre-
" pared, and that which ſwims in the ſea, and that
" which is the ſquare ſtone of the noble animal;
" ſo that every part may be free from the infection
" of another. But if that ſtone cannot be acquir-
" ed, let other elements, ſeparated, divided, and
" purified, be uſed.

" Now when this thing is like to youth that is
" of temperate complexion, it hath good opera-
" tions; if its temperature be better, it produceth
" better effects; ſometimes it is even in the higheſt
" degree of its perfection, and then there is that
" property whereof we have ſpoken before. This
" differs from other medicines and nutriments,
" which heat and moiſten after a certain temperate
" manner, and are good for old men. For other
" medicines principally heat and moiſten the body;
" and, ſecondarily, they ſtrengthen the native heat;
" but this doth principally ſtrengthen the native

" heat, and after that, refreſhes the body by moiſt-
" ening and heating it. For it reduces this heat in
" old men, who have it but weakly and deficient,
" to a certain ſtronger and more vehement power.
" If a plaſter be made hereof, and applied to the
" ſtomach, it will help very much, for it will re-
" freſh the ſtomach itſelf, and excite an appetite;
" it will very highly recreate an old man, and
" change him to a kind of youth, and will make
" complexions, by what means ſoever depraved or
" corrupted, better.

" MANY wiſe men have ſpoken but little of this
" thing; they have indeed laid down another thing
" like it, as Galen, is his fifth book of ſimple medi-
" cines, and Johannes Damaſcenus, in his aphoriſms.
" But is to be obſerved, that Venus doth weaken
" and demoliſh the power and virtue of this thing;
" and it is very likely that the ſon of the prince, in
" his ſecond canon of ſimple medicines, ſpoke of the
" thing, where he ſaith, " that there is a certain me-
" dicine concealed by wiſe men, leaſt the incontinent
" ſhould offend their Creator." There is ſuch a heat
" in this thing, as in young men of a ſound com-
" plexion, and if I durſt declare the properties of
" this heat, this moſt hidden ſecret ſhould preſent-
" ly be revealed. For this heat doth help the pal-
" ſical, it reſtores and preſerves the waſted ſtrength
" of the native heat, cauſeth it to flouriſh in all
" the members, and gently revives the aged."

Theſe are preciſely the words of Fryar Bacon; the thing now to be conſidered is, whether we have rightly interpreted them, or whether they are capable of any juſter and more natural ſenſe, which after a few reflections on the motives that determined us, thus to explain it, ſhall be left to the reader's judgment.

SOME have entertained an opinion, that this myſterous preparation was no other than the quinteſſence of human blood; but whoever conſiders the deſcription of it, in all its parts, will eaſily diſcern that it can be no ſuch thing, ſince the odour or ſcent of it is recommended on account of its grateful ſweetneſs; beſides, quinteſſences are taken inwardly, whereas, he directs this medicine to be applied as a plaſter to the ſtomach, and indeed the other marks agree with ſuch a quinteſſence as ill as this. Others have believed, that our author intended here to deſcribe a kind of precious ſtone, but ſuch muſt be abſolutely unacquainted with his manner of writing; for he is no affecter of myſteries, in order to ſtrike his reader with amazement, or to raiſe his own reputation, both of theſe little arts he juſtly condemned. His obſcurity proceeds from this, that at the time he wrote he was in priſon for writing againſt the philoſophy that was then current, and he addreſſed this book to pope Nicholas IV. his proſecutor, in order to obtain his pardon; but being doubtful how far it would operate, he was very cautious in writing, that he

might

might not afford room for a ſecond accuſation, of laying things ſecret in their nature open to vulgar capacities. Now, if he was here deſcribing a precious ſtone, why ſhould he talk ſo darkly? this certainly did not require ſo much pains to be taken to hide it, and ſo far would ſuch a dark account have been from ſerving this purpoſe, that it would have been viſibly contrary to his deſign, by leaving room for extraordinary conjectures, where, without the leaſt danger, he might have ſpoken out. Whereas, if our interpretation be admitted, there was the utmoſt reaſon for all this caution; his apology is perfectly reaſonable, and all the doubtings and heſitations that are thrown in, appear ſo many modeſt excuſes, very artfully and very properly placed.

LET us conſider this deſcription of Bacon's, and compare it with the picture drawn by the hand of a greater and ſtill more knowing man, and we ſhall be apt to think that we hear Solomon deſcribing the lovely Shunamite. Look upon Bacon's words again, and imagine the thin veil to be removed; you will then ſee the perfect figure of this damſel that was very fair; you will diſcern the roſe of Sharon, and the lily of Damaſcus; her hair like purple, in curling locks; her two young roes that are twins, feeding among lilies; her head filled with the dew, and her locks with the drops of the night; her countenance fair as the moon, clear as the ſun; her fruit ſweet to the taſte, as ſhe ſets under the ſhadow with

with great delight; her ſpikenard and chief ſpices, while the ſouth wind blows upon her garden, that the ſpices thereof may blow; her well of living waters, and ſtreams of Lebanon; and here the faireſt among women is wounded by the watchmen, and then her beloved departs.

THIS commentary ſufficiently explains the text; but to put it beyond doubt, and to apply all this effectually to my ſubject, I ſhall touch gently on two or three remarkable paſſages. In the firſt place, our author ſays, that this medicine is likened to that which goes out of the mine of the noble animal, and what can this mine be but woman, in whom, as in a mine, the noble animal is formed. Then again, our author ſays, the infirmity of a brute animal rarely paſſes into man, but into another animal of the ſame kind; but the infirmity of a man paſſes into man, and ſo does health, becauſe of likeneſs. Here he lays open a great ſecret in philoſophy, viz. that there is a ſympathy in health, as well as contagion in diſeaſe, and that as a morbid breath infects, ſo a wholeſome one may exhilarate. Taken in this ſenſe, nothing can be eaſier, plainer, or more rational, nor is there any other ſenſe the words, literally taken, can bear. The laſt paſſage I ſhall remark is, when he obſerves, that Venus weakens and diminiſhes the power and virtue of this remedy. How exactly does this agree with the pertinent reflection of the author of the book of Kings, when repeating

peating the uſes David made of Abiſhag; he ſays, with a particular emphaſis, "but the king knew her not." A young virgin taken in this manner, recalls heat and life into an old man; but if forgetting that this is a temporary and artificial vigour, he uſes it as if it were a natural one; he may indeed give life to another, but it will be at the expence of his own. When theſe exploits are related to us as marks of old men's vigour, we ſhould ſet them down as marks of their folly too; for as Solomon ſays, that "there is a time to be born, and a time to die;" ſo nature and true philoſophy teach, that there is a time to beget, and a time to abſtain from begetting.

I WILL take the liberty alſo of drawing ſome advantage even from the ſecond objection, ſince, with reſpect to Eaſtern princes, though it be true that moſt of them die early, yet is it no leſs true that, where they do not die violent deaths, they frequently live to a great age; as for inſtance, Shah Abbas, and Aurengzebe. Now if we conſider the conſtant and prodigious fatigues of theſe monarchs, the many battles they fought, the tedious marches they made, the variety of dangers they ran through, and the vaſt expence of ſpirits that a life of ſuch inceſſant action, and ſuch intenſe thought, muſt occaſion; it will not be eaſy to find in a country where the art of phyſic is far from being ſo perfect as it is even in Europe; I ſay it will be hard to find, in ſuch places, any medicine capable of producing ſo extra-

ordinary

ordinary effect, if we exclude this of which I am ſpeaking. For though I am very doubtful, and therefore lay no ſtreſs on the wholeſomeneſs of the breath of women; yet, in the ſeraglios of ſuch princes, there are always ſo many virgins, and theſe of ſuch near acceſs to the perſon of the prince, that I cannot but apprehend his vigour and health to be greatly aſſiſted by thoſe ſalutiferous ſtreams of balſamic air. I cannot help adding what ſeems to be ſtill a ſtronger argument in favour of my ſuppoſition, and it is this, that the Arab princes ſcattered through the dominions of the grand Signior, who are leſs expoſed to foreign wars, or domeſtic intrigues, than other oriental princes, actually live beyond the ordinary age of man, and die at laſt as every man ought to die, becauſe their blood can run no longer. At leaſt, I have a right to make uſe of a circumſtance ſo probable as this is, in ſupport of my opinion, when it is thought reaſonable to take a fact, which has only a ſuperficial reſemblance to the caſe I have ſtated, as a ſufficient ground for an objection againſt the poſition I am endeavouring to make good; probability is certainly nearer a-kin to evidence, than a bare ſimilitude of circumſtances, which vaniſhes upon a ſtrict examination.

AFTER theſe excurſions, let us return to a more ſtrict examination of our ſubject: I have already ſhewn how the breath of virgins may operate upon old men, when mixed with the common air, and

ſo reſpired by them. But let us conſider a little, whether theſe numerous and ſubtile effluvia may not operate ſome other way than this. All phyſicians agree, ſince the doctrine of the circulation of the blood has been eſtabliſhed, as well as made known to the world, by the ſkill and learning of that incomparable Engliſhman Dr. Harvey [x], that a great part of our aliments, after entering the blood, are thrown out from thence in ſo imperceptible a manner, that this kind of evacuation is very properly ſtiled inſenſible perſpiration. This was firſt carefully examined by Sanctorius, who found that it was far more conſiderable alone, than all the other animal ſecretions taken together [y]. If this be ſo, and that it is ſo, no man in his ſenſes now doubts, then it follows, that there muſt be prodigious quantities of the matter of this inſenſible perſpiration, mixed in the air, ſurrounding the perſpiring bodies, and conſequently this air muſt be impregnated ſtrongly with the qualities inherent to that matter.

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[x] Our author alludes here to the remarkable felicity of Dr. Harvey, who originally found, and then fully demonſtrated the doctrine of the circulation of the blood, which was at firſt, as moſt new inventions are, oppoſed with great heat and ſpleen; but came at laſt to be as generally received and admired, as it deſerves. Dr. Harvey died in 1657, thirty years after he firſt publiſhed his diſcovery; in his Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis. Printed at Francfort in 1627.

[y] See his famous treatiſe De Medicina Statica, which the Engliſh reader may conſult in own language, tranſlated by the judicious and indefatigable Dr. Quincy.

If we puſh this enquiry ſtill further, and labour to make ourſelves acquainted with the nature of the particles that are thus thrown off, a little attention will make that matter plain. For ſince inſenſible perſpiration is owing to the circulation of the blood, it neceſſarily follows, that the particles thrown off by the blood, muſt participate of the nature of that fluid from which they are thrown off. Now we know the blood of young people to be ſoft, oily, and balſamic, as well as we can know any thing, becauſe this appears to us from its effects, which are a briſk and lively diſpoſition; perfect health, and quick growth, to all which, a blood thus conſtituted, is abſolutely neceſſary. Upon theſe principles, it is plain, that the matter perſpired by young people in ſuch circumſtances, as I have ſuppoſed the pupils of Hermippus to be, muſt have all the qualities of their blood, and be a ſoft, ſmooth, ſlippery, balſamic ſteam, continually flowing from their bodies, and as they are conſtantly drawing in the circumambient air, and continually throwing off this matter, they muſt, in the compaſs of a few hours, abſolutely change the whole maſs of air, in a room where they are taught by their preceptor, who, in that caſe, will receive into himſelf a large proportion of this perpirable matter, in the ſame manner that it is thrown off by them.

THERE are many people, I know, who will be apt to treat this part of my diſcourſe as whimſical and chimerical, and, for this very reaſon, I have not inſiſted upon it ſo largely as I might have done, or in ſuch ſtrong and direct terms. I might have entered nicely into the computations that have been made of the quantity of matter thrown off in this way, and from thence I might have deduced many curious, and, to competent judges, convincing proofs; but I affect not this critical kind of writing, which might poſſibly deprive me of a great number of readers, and ſecure the aſſent only of thoſe who are leaſt likely to carry this doctrine into practice. But let me have leave to obſerve, that what I have laid down, is an indiſputable fact, and not among the number of thoſe about which much has been written, and nothing ſettled. Sanctorius, who firſt treated this matter judiciouſly, and practically, had the honour to perfect his diſcovery, and to carry the matter as far as it could go, and this in the beſt method, I mean that of experiments; for he had a chair fixed on a balance, and in ſuch a manner accommodated with ſprings, as to diſcover the ſlighteſt alteration in his weight. By the uſe of this chair, and by conſtant obſervation of what he eat, drank, perſpired, and evacuated every other way; he came at the certain knowledge of what he has delivered, and therefore we may, with the utmoſt confidence, believe that, at leaſt, one half of what we eat or drink,

drink, after paſſing through the blood, is thrown off in the way I have deſcribed [z].

A VERY ingenious Frenchman, to whom the world is indebted for as profitable, and at the ſame time as pleaſant a work, as any publiſhed of late years, has endeavoured to illuſtrate this doctrine by a very well contrived fiction, which I will repeat to the reader, becauſe nothing can ſerve my purpoſe better, as I am perſuaded nothing can entertain him more [a]. "The day after our arrival at London, "ſeveral tradeſmen came to our lodgings, in order "to ſell us the commodities and curioſities of their "country. Every one of the company fixed readily "his attention on what pleaſed him moſt. Some "bought gloves, others ribbons, and others ſilk "ſtockings; the merchandize which fell to my "ſhare, was ſeveral perſpective glaſſes and micro-"ſcopes. He who ſold them was an excellent ma-"thematician, a man of great capacity, and could "ſpeak French tolerable well. I kept him to din-

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[z] We muſt conſider, in reaſoning upon this ſubject, that Sanctorius wrote in Italy, where the perſpiration may be reaſonably ſuppoſed much greater than in northern countries, of which our author was aware, and has made a proper deduction.

[a] Mélanges d'Hiſtoire et de Literature, par M. De Vigneul-Marville. Tom. ii. p. 461. It may not be amiſs to obſerve, that this is not the true name of the author of that curious book, but one, under which he choſe to hide it, on account of ſome free cenſures contained in that diverting miſcellany.

"ner, and as he was mighty well pleaſed with the "entertainment, he told me, after he roſe from ta- "ble, that he had a great curioſity to ſhew me. "He then took out of a ſhagreen box, an inſtru- "ment in a tortoiſhell caſe, which proved to be a "moſt excellent microſcope. I may well beſtow "this epithet upon it, ſince it was ſo excellent as "not only to diſcover an infinity of bodies imper- "ceptible to the naked eye, but even the atoms of "Epicurus, the ſubtile matter of Deſcartes, the va- "pours of the earth, thoſe which flow from our "own bodies, and ſuch as derive to us here the "influence of the ſtars.

"THE firſt experiment I made, was looking on "the perſon from whom I received it, at the diſ- "tance of four or five paces, which gave me the "opportunity of diſcerning an infinite number of "little worms that were feeding moſt voraciouſly "upon his cloaths, by which I perceived, that con- "trary to the common opinion, it is not we who "wear out our cloaths, but they are fairly eaten off "our backs by theſe inviſible inſects; I changed "my ſituation, and conſidering my mathematician "in another light, he appeared to be inveloped in "a dark cloud. He told me that this appearance "was owing to his perſpiring ſtrongly after dinner, "and that this ought to convince me of the truth "of what Sanctorius had delivered in reſpect to the "proportion between this and other ſecretions.

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"WE next went into the kitchen, where there "was a large piece of beef roaſting for the ſervants, "and I had the pleaſure of ſeeing with the ſame "microſcope, how the fire ſeparates all the parts "of the wood; upon which it acts and darts them "by the violence of its motion againſt the beef that "turns before it, wounding it as it were with an "infinite number of ſhafts, and ſo tearing it to "pieces, ſome of which are converted into juice, "and others into a delicate kind of ſmoke or va-"pour, which filled the kitchen, and was very ſen-"ſibly diſtinguiſhed by our noſtrils.

"GOING out of the houſe, we ſaw four young "men playing at ball. I, at firſt ſight, felt a "ſtrong inclination in favour of one, and as ſtrong "an averſion againſt another, whence I began earn-"eſtly to wiſh that this might win, and that might "loſe. I examined both with the microſcope, and "thereby eaſily diſtinguiſhed the ſource of theſe "paſſions. As the men were extremely heated "with their exerciſe, they perſpired ſtrongly, ſo that "clouds of the matter flowing from them reached us. "My glaſs ſhewed me diſtinctly that the matter per-"ſpired by him, for whom I had an inclination, was "exactly ſimilar to what was perſpired by myſelf; "whereas, the matter flowing from the other per-"ſon was abſolutely unlike to mine in all reſpects, "and ſo jagged and bearded that it ſeemed to wound

" and pierce me like ſo many arrows. Hence I " diſcerned that the true cauſe of our ſudden in- " clinations and averſions conſiſts in the figures of " the matter perſpiring from us, and from others, " and in the ſimiliarity or contrariety of theſe in- " ſenſible vapours.

" WE went out of the city, and at ſome miles " diſtance, we ſaw ſome gentlemen diverting them- " ſelves in courſing a hare; as the poor creature " paſſed almoſt cloſe by us, I had juſt time to catch " a glance of her with my glaſs. She appeared to " me like a ball of fire moving with prodigious " rapidity, and leaving a mighty ſmoke behind her. " This was the matter perſpired by the animal, and " I ſaw that the dogs followed exactly the track of " that ſmoke, and were never at all at a loſs, ex- " cept when the wind diſſipated the cloud that " iſſued from the flying hare."

IN this ſhort account, our author very ingeniouſly rallies ſuch as expect to have occular demonſtration of things, that do not admit of any ſuch evidence. His microſcope is nothing more than invention to cenſure their folly, and expoſe the madneſs of having that verified to the ſenſes, which can only be apprehended by reaſon; yet this kind of weakneſs ſtill prevails in the world, and, I dare ſay, there is many a reader who would laugh at the ſtory of the hare, as an abſolute fiction, and afterwards bluſh to ſee the

the ſame thing gravely laid down by ſo judicious, ſo intelligent a perſon as the great Boerhaave [b]. There ſeems to be nothing more unintelligible or abſurd, than to aſſert that there are things which are continually loſing part of their weight, and yet never grow diſcernibly lighter; and yet this we ſee in the caſe of the antimonial cup, of which, when we have five hundred times made uſe, and after beſtowing an emetic quality on five hundred glaſſes of wine, remains juſt as heavy as it was at firſt. We may ſay the ſame thing of the odoriferous effluvia of ambergreaſe, and the leſs agreeable ſteam of aſſafœtida. None of theſe things can be brought under the cognizance of all our ſenſes, it is ſufficient to convince our reaſon if they fall under any one of them. For inſtance, if I plainly diſcern

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[b] See his Chemiſtry, vol. i. p. 151. wherein his words are thus tranſlated. The moſt ſubtile part of the juices of animals is a fine ſpirit, which is continually exhaling, wherein the proper character of the animal ſeems to reſide, and whereby it is diſtinguiſhed from all others. This we may infer from hounds, which through a long tract of ground, and a multitude of croſs treads, will diſtinguiſh a particular animal out of a whole flock, the effluvia of whoſe footſteps it had lately ſcented; or will find out their maſter through an hundred croſs ways, in the middle of a confuſed concourſe of people. By this we may infer, how thin and ſubtile, yet how different from all other kinds of bodies, theſe effluvia muſt be. They ſeem of an oily origin, or to reſide in a ſubtile vehicle of an oily kind, as may appear both from the analogy of things and other properties.

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the ſmell of a roſe at a certain diſtance; my reaſon will tell me, that I am within the atmoſphere of that flower, becauſe it is impoſſible that I ſhould diſcern its odour by the ſmell, if its effluvia did not ſtrike the proper organ of that ſenſe in me. Hence, with a little reflection, I can eaſily form a notion of this flower perſpiring an infinite number of odoriferous particles, which, for a certain diſtance, ſo much overcome all the other different ſorts of matter floating in the air, as to become ſo many objects of my ſenſe of ſmelling [c].

BUT now, if we take this the other way, and conſider a body continually perſpiring ſuch a matter as is inſenſible to us, that is, particles ſo ſubtile as to eſcape the cognizance of all our organs of ſenſation, we muſt be extremely dull of apprehenſion, if we do not conceive that this perſpiring body muſt have its atmoſphere as well as the roſe, or any other fragrant flower. It is, therefore, I think, a point now ſettled, paſt all diſpute, that if a number of virgins are in the company of an old man, he muſt derive from them into himſelf a great quantity of that ſubtile matter, the qualities of which have been before deſcribed, and eſpecially if we conſider, that as theſe effluvia eſcape through the pores, the

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[c] See a multitude of theſe inſtances collected, and properly applied in Mr. Boyle's curious treatiſe upon gems.

pores

pores muſt conſequently be continually open, and if ſo, they muſt imbibe from without, as well as give paſſage to what comes from within.

I DOUBT this will appear a new paradox to many of my readers, and methinks I ſee ſome of them ready to throw my treatiſe out of their hands, and crying, with an air of ſelf-ſufficiency and diſdain, this poor man is mad himſelf and he would fain make us ſo. But patience a little, give me leave but to propoſe a few familiar queſtions, and I will defy you to diſbelieve what I had laid down. Is there any thing more common, than to find a ſtrangury enſue upon the application of a bliſter? and yet how can this happen, if the particles of the cantharides did not enter through the pores, and thereby create a diverſion of that ſalt watry fluid which is uſually ſecreted by the kidneys, and compoſes what we call urine. On the other hand, it is a thing certain, that opium, uſed in a plaſter, will procure ſleep, which it could not poſſibly do if, in like manner, it did not find a paſſage through the pores into the blood: I might likewiſe take notice of an effect that frequently, if not conſtantly, reſults from the application of a cataplaſm of camomile to the ſtomach, the bitter taſte of which herb, in the ſpace of two hours, is diſcerned on the palate. I will mention one inſtance more, which is at once ſo ſtrong, and ſo common, as to put the matter quite out of diſpute; I mean the ordinary method of raiſ-

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ing ſalivations by unction; for whoever conſiders this attentively, muſt be ſenſible that the body may be very ſtrongly affected by things that enter into it only through the pores [d].

I CANNOT help taking notice of a very ſingular paſſage in a French hiſtorian, whoſe character is perfectly well eſtabliſhed, and which paſſage, in my apprehenſion, may contribute not a little to render all that I have aſſerted equally credible and clear. This author tells us [e], that in the year 1346, there broke out of the earth in Cathay, which is that part of Great Tartary bordering upon China, a certain vapour, ſo prodigiouſly ſtinking as to deſtroy all living creatures. This, like a ſubterraneous fire, after it once eſcaped, rolled over two hundred leagues of country, devouring even the very trees and ſtones, and affected the air in a wonderful manner. From Cathay it paſſed through Aſia and Greece, from thence it croſſed over into Africa, and after ravaging that country, it entered Europe in 1348, making ſuch havock in France, that not ſo much as a ci-

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[d] The Montpelier way of ſalivating is ſtill a ſtronger proof of this, ſince it argues that this method of raiſing it is ſafer, more equal, and better adapted to the ends it is to anſwer, than that of taking things by the mouth.

[e] Abregé Chronologique de l'Hiſtoire de France, par le ſieur de Mezeray, tom. iii. p. 32.

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ty, village, or ſingle houſe eſcaped, and from thence it paſſed into other countries, ſo as to reach even the utmoſt extremities of the north; the venom, ſays my author, was ſo contagious, as to infect even by the ſight. It was remarked, that it continued exactly five months in every country through which it paſſed. In thoſe places where it was moſt favourable, it left only a third of the inhabitants, in moſt about a fifteenth, in ſome not above a twentieth part. Can one conceive that an exhalation ſhould paſs quite round the globe, and produce ſuch terrible effects wherever it came, and ſhall we believe that exhalations which are continually ſurrounding us, have no effects at all? Or ought we to apprehend, that if ſuch dreadful feats can be wrought by ſtinking and noxious exhalations, there is nothing nutritive or ſalutary to be performed by thoſe of an oppoſite kind? I muſt confeſs, that I ſee no ground for ſuch a belief.

THERE is undoubtedly, as the learned Bacon lays it down, a healthy ſympathy, as well as a morbid infection[f]; and as in ſpight of all the care and caution we can take, we find it extremely hard

[f] See p. 64. in the quotation from Bacon. If this argument be not allowed, it will be hard to aſſign any rational cauſe, why one place ſhould be more healthy than another; and to underſtand this doctrine perfectly, the reader ought to conſult Mr. Boyle's treatiſe of the wholeſomeneſs and unwholeſomneſs of the air.

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to guard againſt, and to ward off the latter; ſo by a parity of reaſon, it ſhould ſeem, that of all the methods contributing to health, the former ought to prove the moſt efficacious: that is to ſay, we think there is no way hitherto laid down for preſerving the vigour of the body, and thereby ſecuring ſuch a ſupply of animal ſpirits, as may ſupport the dominion of the ſoul, in its full extent and activity, ſo feaſible as this; which is ſuggeſted to be the ſource of the longevity, and healthfulneſs of Hermippus. For if inſenſible perſpiration be made through the pores, ſo that there is a continual ſteam tranſpiring from every body, then it follows, that where an old man is conſtantly attended by many young women, his body muſt be ſurrounded with an infinite quantity of the perſpirable matter flowing from them; and if, on the other hand, he not only perſpires through the pores, but alſo receives by them, as has been already demonſtrated, the fineſt and moſt ſpirituous particles of other bodies into his own; then it is very evident, that ſuch an old man muſt be, as I obſerved before, in ſuch a ſituation, as will enable him to draw the greateſt poſſible benefit from this moſt comfortable medicine.

THE more ſtrictly we conſider the ſtructure of the human body, and the certain cauſes of health and ſickneſs, the more reaſon we ſhall find to be ſatisfied with, and to acquieſce in the ſyſtem we have laid down. Reaſon and experience have convinced

us, that the body is a pneumatico-hydraulic machine compoſed of fluids and ſolids, and that a good conſtitution, or healthy diſpoſition ariſes from the proper motion of the one, and a due circulation of the other. It is alſo, no leſs certain, that this motion, and this circulation, depend reciprocally on each other. For as the circulation is obſtructed, leſſened, and in ſome meaſure ſtopped from the want of a proper motion of the ſolids, occaſioned by their loſs of the true tone and texture which they ought to have; ſo this very loſs, on the other hand, ariſes from their not receiving a timely and ſuitable ſupply of nutrition from the circulating juices[g]. Hence that dryneſs, ſtiffneſs, and rigidity of the fibres, which properly cauſes the diſeaſe we call old age, to prevent which, in a natural, rational, and phyſical way, the only proper method is, to provide a conſtant, equal, and effectual ſupply of ſmooth, balſamic, and lubricating particles from the circulating fluids. If this could once be done, it is, I think, very apparent, that old age could no more attack the human body, than any other diſeaſe, againſt which proper precautions may be taken. But, as it is not to be expected that human wiſdom ſhould be able to perfect ſuch a method, all that we can reaſonably hope for, is, to arrive at ſome proficiency therein; ſo that though we are not able to prevent old age, we may have it at leaſt in our power to retard it. It is in a manner

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[g] Boerhaav. Inſtit. Medic. § 1053, 1054.

incredible,

incredible, that by art, a man ſhould be able to reach two or three hundred; but that he ſhould live and enjoy life to upwards of an hundred, the wiſeſt of the antients believed, and the methods they preſcribed and practiſed for this purpoſe, are all founded upon my principles, as appears from their uſe of frictions, baths, and ointments, all of which had been idle and improper, if they had not conceived it poſſible to charge the fluids, by means of them, with ſuch particles as were fit to repair the loſſes of the ſolids [h].

THE greateſt philoſophers, and the wiſeſt men in all ages, have had this point in view, and have endeavoured to accompliſh it; but this has been attended with two inconveniencies, or rather three, which I conſider as the true cauſes why hitherto it has not been accompliſhed. The firſt is, that they have kept their notions ſecret; that is to ſay, relying upon their own abilities, they have fancied themſelves capable of diſcovering this wonderful art, and of making it not only ſubſervient to the private and particular purpoſe of preſerving their own lives, but to the raiſing and exalting of their fame. In the next place, they have run away with particular circum-

[h] Inſtead of citing phyſicians, I ſhall refer the reader to Plutarch's learned treatiſe on health and long life, where, in a narrow compaſs, he will ſee the ſenſe of the beſt writers in all antiquity on this ſubject.

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ſtances, and have fancied that this or that drug would reſtore nature, or ſuch a particular regimen defend them from diſeaſes. As to the firſt, there is not, perhaps, a ſingle article of the Materia Medica, that is hitherto fully underſtood, which is the true reaſon of the great incertainty of phyſic; and as to regimen, it may, and certainly has, a great effect in preſerving health; but, as the wiſe lord Bacon judiciouſly obſerved, preſerving health, and extending life, are two very different things [1].

LASTLY, theſe very underſtanding perſons have dealt intirely in theory, and by this means have been ſurpriſed by death, while they were under a firm perſuaſion of being ſecure from his attacks; whereas, ſuch an art muſt be founded wholly in experiment, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter. In the mean time, I will produce a remarkable inſtance in ſupport of

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[1] We ſhall hereafter give the reader the very words of lord Bacon upon this ſubject, in the mean time, it may not be improper to obſerve ſome of the moſt conſiderable variations in the regimen for health and long life. With reſpect to the former, the diet may be fuller and freer, the exerciſe briſker, and the ſleep ſhorter, than with regard to the latter. The reaſon of which is not difficult to conceive; for health implies only keeping the machine of the body in perfect order, which requires barely, that the materials wear out equally; but for the prolonging of life, great care muſt be taken to preſerve the materials, that they may be as little worn as poſſible, and conſequently laſt as long as the nature of them will allow.

what I have been ſaying, which, if I am not very much miſtaken, will afford the reader amuſement and information [k].

THE very ingenious and knowing M. Des Maizeaux, in the life of M. St. Evremond, tells us, this gentleman was informed by Sir Kenelm Digby, that having read the writings of that great philoſopher Des Cartes, he reſolved to go over to Holland on purpoſe to ſee him. He did ſo, and found him in his retirement at Egmond. There that ſtudious and intelligent perſon received and converſed with him

[k] This Sir Kenelm Digby was a very learned and a very great man. He had indeed ſome particular notions in philoſophy, and did not always explain himſelf ſo clearly as he might have done, whence occaſion has been taken to miſrepreſent his opinions, and thus miſrepreſented, to treat them as ridiculous; but that he was really a moſt intelligent and ſagacious perſon, will appear from his explanation of electricity, which, as it is contained in few words, I will ſet down for the reader's conſideration. According to his hypotheſis, the amber, or other electric, being chafed or heated, is made to emit certain rays or files of unctuous ſteams, which, when they come to be a little cooled by the external air, are ſomewhat condenſed, and having loſt of their former agitations, ſhrink back to the body whence they ſallied out, and carry with them thoſe light bodies that their further ends happen to adhere to at the time of their refraction; as when a drop of oil or ſyrup hangs from the end of a ſmall ſtick, if that be dexterouſly and cautiouſly ſtruck, the viſcous ſubſtance will by that impulſe be ſtretched out, and preſently retreating, will bring along with it the duſt, or other light bodies that have happened to ſtick to the remoter parts of it.

as a ſtranger, but after a cõnſiderable time ſpent in a free and learned diſcourſe upon a great variety of ſubjects, M. Des Cartes, who had ſeen ſome of his works, told him, "that he did not doubt but he was "the famous Sir Kenelm Digby." "And if you, Sir, "replied the knight, were not the illuſtrious M. Des "Cartes, I ſhould not have come over from England "on purpoſe to ſee you." Then Sir Kenelm Digby remarked to the philoſopher, "that our ſpeculative "diſcoveries were indeed pretty and agreeable; but "that after all, they were too uncertain and unpro-"fitable to take up a man's whole thoughts; that "life was almoſt too ſhort to attain to the right "knowledge of neceſſary things; that it would be "much more worthy of him, who ſo well under-"ſtood the frame of the human body, to ſtudy ways "and means to prolong it, than to apply himſelf "to the barren ſpeculations of philoſophy." Des Cartes aſſured him, that he had already conſidered that matter, and that to render a man immortal, was what he would not venture to promiſe; but that he was very ſure it was poſſible to lengthen out his life to the period of the patriarchs. When M. de St. Evremond told M. Des Maizeaux this particular, he added, that they were not ignorant in Holland that Des Cartes flattered himſelf he had made this diſcovery, and that he had heard ſeveral perſons talk of it, who had known that philoſopher; that Des Cartes' friends alſo in France knew it, and that Abbot Picot, his diſciple and martyr, being perſuaded

that he had found out this great ſecret, would not believe the news of his death, and that when he was aſhamed to doubt of it any longer, he cried out, "Tis "done and over, the world will ſoon be at an end!"

It is certain, as M. Des Maizeaux obſerves, that Des Cartes thought he had found out a way to prolong the life of man [1]. "I never took ſo much care, "ſaid he to M. De Zuylichem, who aſked him what "he was employed about; to preſerve my life as now, "and whereas I thought heretofore, that death could "abridge me of thirty or forty at moſt, it cannot ſurprize me now, without depriving me of the hope "of above an hundred years. For it ſeems evident "to me, that if we only guarded againſt certain errors, that we are wont to commit in our courſe of "diet, we might, without any other intention, attain to an old age much longer, and more happy "than now we do. But becauſe I have need of a "great deal of time and experience to examine every "thing proper to this ſubject, I am now compoſing "a ſhort ſyſtem of medicines, by which I hope, "while I am engaged in this work, to obtain ſome "reſpite from nature, and conſequently to be able "to proſecute my deſign better hereafter." M.

[1] Lettres de M. Des Cartes, tom. xi. p. 374. He wrote this letter in the forty-third year of his age, and died about twelve years afterwards; ſo that nothing can be more evident, than that he was entirely miſtaken in his notion upon this ſubject.

Baillet

Baillet tells us in his life of Des Cartes, that the Abbot Picot having accompanied him to Holland, in 1647, conformed to his courſe of diet, during the three months which he ſtayed with him at Egmond; and that he was ſo pleaſed with it, that at his return to France, he ſeriouſly renounced that good eating and drinking which before he liked well enough, and was reſolved to reduce himſelf to the rules of M. Des Cartes, thinking it would be the only way to promote the ſucceſs of the ſecret, which he pretended was actually found out by our philoſopher, to make men live four or five hundred years. And the ſame writer tells us, in another place, that this abbot was ſo fully perſuaded that Des Cartes could not be miſtaken in his notions on this point, that he would have ſworn, it would have been impoſſible for him to die as he did at the age of fifty-four; and that had it not been for ſome unaccountable violent cauſe, like that which once put his machine in Sweden out of order, he would have unqueſtionably lived five hundred years.

THE miſcarriage of M. Des Cartes is indeed an argument againſt his method, whatever it was; but it proves nothing to the prejudice of his opinion, that life may be extended and old age retarded. Many of his principles in philoſophy are very good, and many of the arguments he uſed very juſt; but, in the latter part of his life, he became enamoured of his own notions, and ran into a prodigious fond-

neſs for hypotheſis; and thus, by conceiting himſelf more than man, he became no longer the great man that he was. A misfortune this, which has happened to others as well as Des Cartes, and which will happen to every man who runs out into extravagant lengths, and fancies that he ſees farther into nature, and penetrates more deeply into the myſteries of Providence, than all who have gone before him. Humility is not only a chriſtian, but a philoſophic virtue; for the wiſer a man is, the leſs opinion he has of his own knowlege; as he who is a great traveller, is freeſt from the conceits which the vulgar have of the excellency of their own countries. In fine, it was the knowlege of Des Cartes that made him conceive the prolonging human life practicable, and his vanity made him miſtake the finding there was ſuch a ſecret, for the ſecret itſelf [m].

BUT

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[m] What our author ſays of M. Des Cartes is very exact; but at the ſame time a little obſcure. He ſeems to have a great diffidence of his own judgment, and is therefore very modeſt in his cenſures; but though, in one ſenſe, this may be very commendable, yet, in another, it deſerves to be reproved. He ſays, that Des Cartes found that ſuch a ſecret might be practicable as to extend the life of man beyond its ordinary date, and he ſays, that his vanity made him miſtake this for the ſecret itſelf. It is very true, but it is not very clear; it is a very juſt character of this philoſopher, but, at the ſame time, it is a very dark one. In ſhort, the caſe was this, M. Des Cartes had a very quick penetration, which enabled him to ſee the errors of Ariſtotle, and the ſchoolmen, and as one who ſees clearly will always ſpeak clearly,

BUT as I have ſaid, experiment is the true teſt of every branch of practical philoſophy. We ſee and know the incommodities of old age, and the times at which they are uſually felt, and therefore the faireſt token of the true method of arriving at healthy longevity is the keeping clear of theſe incommodities at thoſe ſeaſons of life. He that knows how to

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clearly, ſo he found it no difficult thing to ruin their reputation, and with it the credit of their philoſophy. But when, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, he came to rectify philoſophy, his vanity reſulting from his ſucceſs, led him into an opinion, that he could account for every thing by mere dint of parts, and eſtabliſh ſuch a new philoſophy as ſhould univerſally prevail in like manner as the old one. Hence it appears, that he was a falſe patriot in ſcience; for he did not remove Ariſtotle's tyranny, in order to make the world free, but that he might ſupplant him, and rule as a perpetual dictator in his turn; in which, if he was not ſo lucky as he deſired, he was much more lucky than he could expect, and his reign had laſted much longer, if Sir Iſaac Newton had not depoſed him, and generouſly reſtored a philoſophic freedom in thinking. As to the point of which our author ſpeaks he had certainly diſcovered, that the machine of the human body might be kept much longer in order than it uſually was, which Sir Kenelm Digby knew as well as he; but then he flattered himſelf that he had parts ſufficient to diſcover the means alſo of doing this, and having invented ſome method or other for this purpoſe, he preſumed it muſt be the true method, becauſe it was of his invention; and this will be found to be of a piece with the whole ſtructure of his philoſophy, there being hardly any part of it, ſo far as it is his, that, upon a ſtrict enquiry, has been found free, or agreeable to nature; and this, I hope, is a tolerable explanation and defence of our author's cenſure.

manage his body, ſo as to anſwer all the intentions of phyſic without uſing it, who can protect himſelf from dimneſs of ſight, dulneſs of hearing, numbneſs or pains in his limbs, the ſinking of his muſcles, the tremor of the nerves, and ſuch other infirmities; may reaſonably hope that he has made ſome progreſs in the ſcience, and will certainly act rationally in proſecuting his method, whatever it may be. But then he muſt carefully diſtinguiſh between the effects of his method, and the conſequences of a happy conſtitution, for without doubt theſe are often miſtaken for each other, and as it is very poſſible that a man may be deceived in aſcribing that to art which is really due to nature; ſo, as I have hinted before, it is a thing not at all leſs probable, that many have been indebted to art (which they practiſed without knowing it) for what they imagined aroſe from nature. He who attentively conſiders what has been ſaid before, of the unuſual vigour of old men that have delighted in young company, will eaſily apprehend what I mean, and to talk intelligibly upon a ſubject that has hitherto been ſo little examined, is the greateſt merit that I pretend to aſſume [n].

AFTER

[n] What our author ſays expreſsly here, and what he has hinted in many other places, is very ſenſible and curious, and therefore deſerves to be illuſtrated. He gives us to underſtand that accident and art, which are generally ſpeaking, thought two of the moſt oppoſite things in the world, are, notwithſtanding, very often

AFTER all, we ought to keep conſtantly in mind that the principal and ſtrongeſt cauſes of that complication of ſymptoms, which appear in the natural

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often the ſame. This is juſt the caſe of chance and providence, for when men do not diſcern the cauſes of events, they ſay they happen by chance, but when they perceive, or think they perceive their cauſes, they are willing from thence to acknowlege a providence. An inſtance will make all clear. There was, about the beginning of the laſt century, a dealer in ſilks at Lyons, in France, whoſe name was Octavio May, a man of a good capacity, and great diligence, but by a chain of unlucky events, his affairs were brought into a very unhappy ſituation. His caſh ran ſhort, his reſources failed, and his creditors began to ſuſpect, all was not right; in this unlucky ſituation he knew not who to conſult, or how to go on. In this melancholy ſtate, ſtanding one day in his ſhop brooding over his misfortunes, he happened to put a little tuft of raw ſilk into his mouth, and grinding it a while between his teeth, at laſt ſpit it out. As it fell immediately before him, he obſerved that it had a very unuſual luſtre, which ſtruck him ſo much, that it brought him out of his fit of the vapours. He took it up, conſidered it, and being a man of abilities, immediately traced the whole progreſs of the operation, the rubbing between the teeth, the mixture of a clammy liquor, ſuch as the ſaliva, and the performing this in a place moderately warm, as the mouth is. He immediately went to work, and copying nature, produced thoſe luſtered or watered taffeties, for which Lyons has been ever ſince famous, and thereby acquired an immenſe fortune himſelf, and eſtabliſhed a manufacture, which has been a continual ſource of riches to that city ever ſince. My inference is, that to a leſs ſenſible man, the ſhining of the raw ſilk had been accident, but Octavio May had prudence enough to trace the cauſes, and to catch that art, which otherwiſe perhaps, human invention had never attained.

diſeaſe of old age are external, as hath been before largely ſhewn, and therefore external remedies ſhould be ſought. It ſeems to be the ſpecific difference between old age, and other diſeaſes; that the latter proceed chiefly from things that we receive into our bodies, whereas the former will come upon us in ſpite of any care we can take in that reſpect; and though it is a point of very great conſequence, towards a green old age, that we eſcape diſtempers, by which the body is weakened and deſtroyed; yet this is not the only thing to be done, for, on the one hand, we ſee that the moſt healthy perſons are not always long-lived, and, on the other hand, thoſe of weak and ſickly conſtitutions ſurvive ſometimes to the uſual age of man [o]. We may likewiſe obſerve, that extraordinary changes in living have wonderful effects, as in the caſe of Cornaro, who not only paſſed his youth freely, but, as himſelf acknowleges, ran into various exceſſes, which brought upon him infirmities that phyſic could not cure, and which, notwithſtanding, temperance removed. We likewiſe know that change of climate has wonderful effects.

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[o] What our author ſays here is very agreeable to the following admonition of the great lord Verulam. We deſire men would obſerve and diſtinguiſh that the ſame things do not always contribute both to a healthy and a long life, for there are ſome of ſervice in procuring chearfulneſs of ſpirits, ſtrength and vigour of the faculties, and yet ſhorten the courſe of life. There are alſo other things very conducive to long life, though with ſome danger to the health, unleſs prevented by ſuitable means.

Such

Such as remove from Portugal to Brazil, old and infirm, revive inſenſibly, and live there many years in health and eaſe; and this is obſerved in other plantations, where, notwithſtanding, the native inhabitants are far enough from being long lived. We may, by reflection upon theſe and many other incidents of a like nature, collect various rules for eſtabliſhing a right method, and perhaps by much thinking, we may fall upon ways and means of acquiring thoſe benefits by a leſs ſtrict regimen than that of Cornaro, and without going ſo far as Portugal, Brazil, or the Weſt Indies; yet there will be much of hazard and incertainty in theſe trials, with this peculiar inconvenience, that if we ſhould miſtake, it is a thouſand to one that this miſtake cannot be repaired.

Hermippus undoubtedly made uſe of a far more rational, as well as efficacious medicine. For we have proved, by all the methods, that the nature of our argument will allow, the particles reſpired and perſpired, by young perſons in full health, to be the ſmootheſt, ſofteſt, and moſt nutritive that can be conceived. On the other hand, the method he took in applying theſe, not only by receiving them with the air every time he drew breath, but drawing them in alſo through all the pores of his body, by that ſort of animal action, which is in a manner ſpontaneous, muſt have increaſed their effects; and taking this altogether, one cannot help conſidering him

him as a perſon in a conſtant warm bath, of the moſt ſpirituous and unctuous humours, which were continually pervading him, at the ſame time that, by the vapours of the young people's breaths, he drank not ſo much air as life. But if we will add one circumſtance further, and that not at all forced and improbable, viz. That he cauſed ſome of theſe young people to lie with him, as David did Abiſhag, we ſhall then carry the medicine to its higheſt pitch, and ſhall eaſily apprehend, that during that time of free and copious perſpiration, he muſt have received ſuch a large ſupply of nutritive ſpirits as effectually refreſhed his nature, and reſtored, in a great meaſure, that waſte which is occaſioned by performing the ordinary functions of life [p].

WE may add the laſt degree of force to this manner of reaſoning, if we may be permitted to argue from contraries. What is more common than to ſee a woman advanced in years grow not only briſk and lively, but ſtrong and healthy, by marrying a young huſband? She drinks his breath, exhales his ſpirits, extracts his moiſture, and thereby

[p] The opinions of many learned phyſicians might have been cited in ſupport of this doctrine, if we had not been afraid of tiring the reader too much; but if he is extremely inquiſitive, he may conſult the following writers. Chriſtian. Forman. de faſcinat. magic. p. 1014. Borellus cent. iii. obſervat. 28. Lan. de motu Tranſpirat. lib. ii. cap. ii. prop. iv. p. 56.

invigorates

invigorates herſelf, while the poor man, ſuffering from the impure contagion of her breath and vapours, and from the malignity of this ill-choſen union, ſinks very quickly into apparent weakneſs, and falls at laſt into what the common people call a galloping conſumption. Strange! that the death of a young man ſhould reſult from his marriage with an old woman, and that the taking of a young wife ſhould repair the waſte, and prolong the life of an old man [q]. Yet, ſo it is, and upon this ſubject I will venture to ſet down a remarkable inſtance from the writings of an unexceptionable witneſs, one, whoſe repute for veracity is as well eſtabliſhed as his fame for learning in general, and for his particular ſkill in phyſic.

THE perſon I mean is, Peter Lotichius, and the example he gives us, this. A man, upwards of eighty years old, married, after the loſs of his firſt wife, a ſecond, who was but twenty-five; when they had been married about a year, he fell into a very extraordinary and dangerous diſtemper; he grew at laſt ſo weak and low, that his caſe was judged to be deſperate. By degrees, however, he became better, and as his ſtrength encreaſed, his grey hair

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[q] Our author has very judiciouſly omitted any inſtance of this kind, probably for two reaſons; firſt, becauſe every man's memory may ſupply him with examples; and, ſecondly, to avoid ſaying too much on a ſubject offenſive to the fair ſex.

and

and white beard fell off gradually, and his ſkin likewiſe began to peel; ſoon after, a light, ſtrong, hair began to peep through the ſkin of his head, which, in time, fell down to his ſhoulders in ſtrong natural curls. His beard came in the ſame manner, and his face acquired a beautiful and florid complexion; in a word, he became a ſound, luſty, and if the expreſſion may be allowed, a young man, which his wife was forced to atteſt, ſince ſhe had by him afterwards ſeveral fine boys [r]. This is an inſtance much to my purpoſe, ſince it proves the prodigious efficacy of human breath, and the matter perſpired by a juvenile body. Yet, give me leave to obſerve, that this extraordinary effort of nature might poſſibly contribute to ſhorten the old man's life, who, without the enjoyment of this young woman, might have preſerved his conſtitution many years, and have lived in the perfect fruition of thoſe pleaſures peculiar to the mind, and for the enjoyment of which it ſeems moſt rational, that life in that ſtate ſhould be prolonged.

THERE is ſomething of the ſame kind obſervable in the well known hiſtory of the famous Engliſh long-liver, Thomas Parre, and theſe particulars are very curiouſly diſtinguiſhed by the great anatomiſt Bartholin, who ſet down his account of him, not as a curioſity to pleaſe children, but as a ſingular and

[r] Obſervat. Medic. lib. iv. Obſerv. 3.

memorable fact, worthy of the attention and conſideration of men. This Parre was born at Winnington, in the county of Salop, in 1483, paſſed his youth there in very hard labour, and, which is as remarkable, in ſobriety and chaſtity. At fourſcore he married his firſt wife Jane, by whom he had two children, neither of which were long lived, or ſhewed any extraordinary ſigns of ſtrength; the firſt died at the age of a month, and the ſecond lived but a few years. At 102 he became enamoured of Katherine Milton, whom he got with child, and did pennance in the church for it. Some months before he died, the earl of Arundel brought him up to London, and preſented him to king Charles I. but through the change of air, and in his manner of living, he died ſoon after; though it was believed he might have ſurvived many years, if he had remained in his own country, and led the ſame life he was wont to do [a]. This man was over-grown with hair, and during the latter part of his life, ſlept very much. In the ſame country lived the famous counteſs of Deſmond, whoſe age

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[a] Bartholin, Hiſt. Anatom. cent. v. hiſt. 28. p. 47, 48. Some accounts make Parre much older, and place his death in 1651; I have conſulted his monument in Weſtminſter-Abbey, and there I find he died on the 15th of November 1635, aged upwards of 152; when his body was opened, his bowels appeared very ſound, only the lungs were ſomewhat injured, which was thought to be owing to the groſſneſs of the town air, and that he might have lived much longer, if on his firſt complaint he had been let blood.

was unknown to herſelf, but extremely well ſupported by the authority of others; ſince from deeds, ſettlements, and other indiſputable teſtimonies, it appeared clearly, that ſhe was upwards of an hundred and forty, according to the computation of the great lord Bacon, who knew her perſonally, and remarks this particularity about her, that ſhe thrice changed her teeth [t]. We have it on the credit of Alexander Benedictus, that there was a lady of his acquaintance, who, at the age of fourſcore, had a complete new ſet of teeth; and though her hair had all fallen off before, yet, at the ſame time ſhe cut her teeth, it grew again, of like colour and ſtrength as at firſt [u]. Bartholin, the famous anatomiſt, whom I cited before, furniſhes us not only with another example, and informs us it was procured by art; but gives us alſo the receipt by which it was done, and which he aſſures us was no other than an extract of black hellebore, diſſolved in an infuſion of wine and roſes [x]. If I miſtake not, the illuſtrious Boyle hath ſomething to the ſame purpoſe about the quinteſſence of balm [y].

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[t] Verulam Hiſt. Vitæ et Mortis. Sir Walter Raleigh's Hiſtory of the World, lib i. cap. v. § 5.

[u] Donat. Hiſt. Med. Mirab. lib. iv. cap. ii. p. 300.

[x] Hiſt. Anatomic. cent. v. hiſt. 28. p. 51.

[y] See his Treatiſe on Specific Remedies. As to the medicine itſelf, it was contrived by Paracelſus. But of this more will be ſaid hereafter.

IT may not be diſagreeable to the reader, if, for the ſake of ſome new obſervations, a few inſtances of both ſexes are added to thoſe that were firſt collected, the rather, becauſe this will plainly ſhew, that though caſes of this nature are both rare and extraordinary, yet they are not to be eſteemed prodigies. We are aſſured, that in the year 1531, there was an old man at Tarentum, in the kingdom of Naples [z], very poor, and decrepid with age, who on a ſudden, if one may be allowed the expreſſion, ſlipt his ſkin like a ſerpent, and both, in appearance and in ſtrength, returned to the age of thirty, or thereabouts. In ſhort, he was ſo altered in ſize, in his countenance, complexion, hair, and fleſhineſs of his limbs, that he was not known to ſuch as had not ſeen him in the actual ſtate of renovation, which took up ſome time, and was not performed but with a pretty ſharp ſenſe of pain. His change of body did not alter his circumſtances, he was ſtill conſtrained to work hard for his living, which he did for fifty years together, and then grew far more decrepid than before, his ſkin becoming rough, hard, and diſcoloured, ſo that it looked rather like the bark of a tree than the hide of an animal; but how long he continued in this condition, or at what age he died, we are not told.

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[z] Hiſtoires Admirables et Memorables, Douay 1604, 8°. p. 697.

WE have it likewiſe on the credit of a good author [a], who was himſelf an eye-witneſs of what he relates, that the abbeſs of the monaſtery of Monviedro, when ſhe was very near a hundred, after a ſevere ſickneſs, which thoſe about her took to be her laſt, had thoſe returns of a periodical diſtemper, which had ceaſed for above forty years, ſoon after which her gums began to ſwell, and a new ſet of teeth appeared; her hair, which was thin, and milk white, fell off, and was ſucceeded by a new ſtock of thick, ſtrong, and black treſſes; the wrinkles of her face peeled off, her limbs became plump, and, in every reſpect, ſhe appeared like a woman of thirty, which brought ſuch a reſort of people to the nunnery as made her aſhamed, ſo that ſhe kept her apartment, and refuſed to ſee any except her near relations, and particular friends [b].

IF

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[a] This relation is taken from the learned Velaſquez of Tarentum, who is very circumſtantial in it, and who obſerves that it became a proverb in the neighbouring country, when an old woman gave herſelf peeviſh airs, "do you think to have as good luck as the abbeſs of Monviedro?"

[b] It ſeems highly probable, that none of theſe changes were the effects either of nature, or of chance; but rather of ſome accident, which, even by thoſe who ſuffered them, was not noticed. I ſay this is highly probable, becauſe if nature, unaſſiſted by art, could produce ſuch changes, it is probable that they would more frequently happen. Now that art can produce them, appears from what friar Bacon ſays, in recommending a medicine made from

If we conſider theſe extraordinary relations attentively, and reflect on the weight of evidence, with which ſome of them, and eſpecially thoſe of Parre, and the counteſs of Deſmond are ſupported, we muſt be ſatisfied, that the human body is a machine capable of very extraordinary changes. For we ought to conſider, that if we are once brought to

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from gold to pope Nicholas IV. He largely explains its virtues, and ſhews particularly how great they are in the cure of the head-ach, palſies, and other diſorders, which ſpring from the brain. He ſays, that Ariſtotle thought the life of man could not be preſerved by any preparation from gold, becauſe gold itſelf is periſhable, or at leaſt the medicines drawn from it; but our author adviſes the pope not to believe this, for, ſays he, this medicine will do admirable things when it is well prepared and thoroughly drawn out. That he might alſo ſhew what he meant by this drawing out, he tells his holineſs that perhaps the liquor was of that kind, i. e. a tincture of gold, which an old huſbandman in the kingdom of Sicily found, as he was ploughing, in a gold veſſel. The man it ſeems was hot and faint, and taking this yelloviſh water which the veſſel contained for a kind of dew, he greedily ſwallowed it, which ſo entirely changed his habit of body and complexion, that from an old man of ſixty, he became like one of thirty, his judgment, memory, and underſtanding, growing alſo much better than they were before; ſo that of a labouring peaſant, he became a courtier, and was advanced to be a gentleman of the bed-chamber to William king of Sicily, in whoſe ſervice, and that of his ſucceſſors, I ſuppoſe, he lived fourſcore years. This fact ſeems to have been very well known, for our author mentions it thrice; firſt, in his book of the Secrets of Art and Nature, again in his Opus Majus, and laſtly, in his book of the Cure of Old Age; and it is from all three relations

to believe that a woman thrice changed her teeth, it is as clear a proof of the poſſibility of the fact, as if we had twenty other examples. Now, if there be a poſſibility of renovating human nature, why on the one ſide ſhould we not ſtudy it? or why on the other ſhould this kind of ſtudy be treated as a vain and fanciful thing? if the office of a phyſician be honourable; if there be ſomething noble and god-like in curing diſeaſes, in ſtoping the progreſs of pain and miſery, and warding off the dart of death for a few years; there is certainly ſomething much more excellent in the art of renewing the human body; ſecuring health and vigour, thro' a long courſe of years; keeping not only death, but his younger brethren, age, and decrepidneſs, at a diſtance. Let us remember, upon this occaſion, what I have already cited from the learned monk Bacon; What, ſays he, if Ariſtotle, Plato, Hippocrates, and Galen, were ignorant of this ſecret; is that a proof that we ſhall not attain it? were they not ignorant of many other ſecrets that are now commonly known; why

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that I have collected the ſeveral circumſtances before-mentioned. This agrees very well with what the learned Boyle tells us, he received from a very curious enquirer into ſecrets of this nature, of his having prepared a medicine, recommended by Paracelſus, which, without explaining its nature, he gave to an old woman, to whom ſoon afterwards thoſe accidents happened, which preceded the wonderful renovation of the lady abbeſs mentioned in the text; but the laſt mentioned old woman was exceedingly frighted, and refuſed to take the medicine any longer.

then ſhould we imagine the barrier of ſcience fixed here, rather than any where elſe? why ſhould we not find out the means of prolonging life, as well as a method for ſquaring the circle? is not the former of as great conſequence to us as men? or is the latter a more uſeful proof of the ſtrength of human underſtanding? Let us proceed then; let us collect and compare (ſince the nature of the thing forbids other experiments) ſuch examples as we meet with in authentic hiſtories; and let us in this, as in other caſes, labour to convert hiſtory into ſcience, by obſerving nicely the particulars in every relation, and endeavour thereby to trace out the manner of nature's working; for if this can be once done, we ſhall be ſoon able to follow her ſteps. If nature at any time vouchſafes this favour to men, it follows, that their bodies have no incapacity of receiving it; that is to ſay, if every man's body was not ſo conſtituted as to exceed by far the ordinary limits of life, it could not poſſibly happen that any man's life ſhould be ſo extended.

FATHER Maffeus, who wrote a celebrated hiſtory of the Indies, which has been always eſteemed a perfect model, in point of veracity, as well as the elegance of its compoſition, gives us the following account, after having related the death of the Sultan of Cambaya, and the conqueſt of his kingdom by the Portugueſe. "They preſented, ſays he, at this "time to the general, a man born amongſt the anci-

" ent Gangards, who are now called Bengalars, who " was 335 years of age. There were various cir- " cumſtances which took from this account all ſuſpi- " cion of falſhood. In the firſt place, his age was " confirmed by a kind of univerſal tradition, all the " people averring that the oldeſt men in their in- " fancy ſpoke of this man's age with aſtoniſhment; " and this old man had then living in his own houſe, " a ſon of ninety years old. In the next place, his " ignorance was ſo great, and he was ſo abſolutely " void of learning, that this removed all ground of " doubt, for by the ſtrength of his memory he was " a kind of living chronicle, relating diſtinctly, " and exactly, whatever had happened within the " compaſs of his life, together with all the circum- " ſtances relating to it. He had often loſt and re- " newed his teeth; his hair, both on his head and " beard, grew inſenſibly grey, and then as inſenſibly " turned black again. The firſt age of his life he " paſſed in idolatry; but for the two laſt centuries " of his life had been a Mohammedan. The ſul- " tan had allowed him a penſion for his ſubſiſ- " tence, the continuance of which he begged from " the general; the ſame motive remaining, which " had firſt induced the king of Cambaya to grant " him a ſuſiſtence, that is to ſay, his great age, and " the extraordinary circumſtances that had attend- " ed his life, theſe prevailed on the general to grant " his requeſt [c]." Thus far Maffeus.

[c] Hiſtoriarum Indicarum, lib. xi. c. 4.

BUT

BUT as it may be very eaſily conceived, that ſo ſtrange a ſtory as this muſt have created many enquiries, and have either ſunk in the world, or in conſequence of thoſe enquiries, received abundance of concurrent teſtimonies; I ſhall therefore beg leave to add ſome very remarkable particulars in relation to this celebrated long-liver, from the Portugueſe hiſtorian, Ferdinand Lopez de Caſtegneda, who was hiſtoriographer royal. He tells us that, in the year 1536, there was a man preſented to the vice-roy of the Indies, Nunio de Cugna, who was near 340 years old.* He remembered that he had ſeen the city in which he dwelt, and which was then one of the moſt populous in the Indies, a very inconſiderable place. He had changed his hair, and recovered his teeth four times, and when the vice-roy ſaw him, his head and beard were black, but the hair weak and thin. He aſſerted that, in the courſe of his life, he had ſeven hundred wives, ſome of which died, and the reſt he had put away. The king of Portugal cauſed a ſtrict enquiry to be made into this matter, and an annual account of the ſtate of the old man's health, to be brought him by the returns of the fleet from India. This long-lived perſon was a native of the kingdom of Bengala, and died at the age of 370 [d]. This hiſtory is in itſelf very

[d] Hiſt. Luſitan. lib. viii.

curious, founded upon good authority, and therefore tranſcribed from the authors I have mentioned, by many curious and inquiſitive perſons, who were alſo proper judges of caſes of this nature, and who have none of them intimated any doubt or ſuſpicion as to the matters of fact [e]. I therefore ſubmit it to the reader's conſideration, whether it be not a matter worthy of reflection; that there is a certain ſtrength in the human body, which, aſſiſted by ſome lucky circumſtances, enables it to renovate itſelf ſometimes once, as in the caſe mentioned by Lotichius; ſometimes oftener, as in that of the counteſs of Deſmond, who bred all her teeth thrice; and the native of Bengala, who changed his hair and teeth four times: and there is another circumſtance of which I cannot but take notice, as it favours my doctrine very much; that this man who lived to an age much greater than any, for which we have as good authority, had ſo many wives, to the efficacy of whoſe breaths, and the inſenſible effluvia of their whoſeſome bodies, I ſhould not ſcruple to attribute in a great meaſure his extraordinary longevity. Theſe, I ſay, are points which deſerve to be conſidered, ſince if ſuch a power there be in the human conſtitution, we ought not to deſpair of finding out methods, which may contribute to its manifeſting

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[e] Bartholin. Hiſt. Anatom. cent. v. Hiſt. 28. p. 46. Camer. hor. ſubſis. cent. II. c. 8. p. 278. Hakewill's Apol. 168.

its

itſelf more frequently; which would be certainly a far greater benefit to mankind, than the bare ſtudy of the proper remedies for uſual and common diſtempers. Let me add, that perhaps if ſuch a method could be found, it muſt alſo defend our bodies from almoſt all diſeaſes, by procuring ſuch a vigour as ſhould be able to withſtand the entrance of them.

WHAT I have advanced in the way of reaſoning, upon this ſubject, may be very ſtrongly corroborated from a relation which I have lately met with, in a very authentic writer, and a relation which I prefer to all others, from the natural and accurate manner in which it is delivered, from whence I perſuade myſelf that the reader will peruſe it with pleaſure, ſince excluſive of the extraordinary facts it contains, it affords the cleareſt and moſt conciſe deſcription of the effects, that follow the ſloweſt and moſt gentle decay, of which the human body, conſidered as a machine, is capable, and thereby fully explains the manner in which death is brought on by the advances of old age, when diſſolution is no way accelerated, either by intemperance or diſtempers of any kind. This muſt be allowed to be very curious, becauſe examples of this nature are rare in all countries, are very ſeldom examined with that nicety and attention they deſerve when they do happen, and if they were ſo juſt, and ſo inſtructive an inſtance as that, which we have in this account, is perhaps not to be found in any author whatever.

All

All theſe circumſtances I have thought proper to premiſe, that the attention of the reader may be awakened, and that he may peruſe ſo extraordinary a piece with that caution and conſideration which it deſerves. Let us now come to the matter of fact.

CAPTAIN Laudonniere, ſays my author [f], ſailed as commodore of a ſmall ſquadron, conſiſting only of three little veſſels well equipped in the year 1564, for the coaſt of Florida, where being arrived, the Sieur d'Ortigny, his lieutenant, was invited by one of the Indian chiefs to the houſe of his father, whom he reported to be both one of the ancienteſt and moſt conſiderable perſons in the country. This interview was managed with much kindneſs and civility on both ſides; for this was not the firſt time that the French had been ſeen in thoſe parts, and the old chief of Florida knew the ſignification of the word Amy, i. e. Friend, which his gueſts often repeated, at which he was mightily pleaſed.

WHEN they ſaw him in this good humour, Mr. Ortigny enquired as well as he was able as to his age: when the old man, in anſwer to this queſtion, ſignified that he was the anceſtor to five generations. He pointed alſo to another old man who ſat over againſt him, and who ſeemed to ſurpaſs him in years very much. Indeed he very well might, for he was the

[f] Hiſtoire de la Floride par M. Baſannier, p. 95.

father of this venerable old man. The ſtrangers took the pains to examine him attentively, and found him to reſemble rather a ſkeleton covered with ſkin, than a human creature, ſtill alive; for his nerves, his veins, his arteries, and, in ſhort, all the veſſels in his body, of what kind ſoever appeared ſo clearly, that they might have been numbered with all the eaſe imaginable. The wonderful effects of age appeared in other reſpects ſtill ſtronger in this decrepid Indian, for he had long before loſt his ſight, and moſt of his other faculties were ſo much impaired, that he could be hardly ſaid to retain any of his ſenſes, yet his ſpeech was not entirely loſt; he could utter ſounds that were intelligible to thoſe about him, but this was in a low and feeble voice, and accompanied with ſuch pain and difficulty, that he declined it as much as poſſible, and choſe rather to make them ſenſible of the few things he wanted by ſigns, to which they were accuſtomed, and which were immediately obeyed by thoſe that were about him, who ſeemed to obſerve him with the utmoſt reverence, as well as attention [g].

AFTER having contemplated at leiſure a ſight ſo very ſurpriſing, the ſieur de Ortigny returned back

[g] It may not be improper to remark, that this muſt be the ſame country in which he informs us, a Saltzburgher told him, the Engliſh found an Indian prince within theſe twenty years, who remembered the coming of the Spaniards into Florida, and the relation of theſe facts to each other is a confirmation of the truth of both,

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to the young old man (I uſe the author's own words) and deſire him, with the utmoſt civility, to give him, if poſſible, a more diſtinct anſwer with reſpect to his age. Upon this, the Indian chief beckoned to ſome who were waiting at a diſtance to approach. When they were near him, he ſtruck his hand upon his thigh twice, and then laid it upon the heads of two old men; after that he ſtruck his thigh again, and laid his hand upon others, and repeating this action five times, and then placed his deſcendants before them, that they might conſider them at leiſure. They did ſo, and by obſerving the difference of their looks, the colour of their hair, and other circumſtances, they conjectured, that it might be very poſſible, that the younger of the two old men might be upwards of two hundred.

THIS is the relation I promiſed, delivered preciſely in the terms of my author, and I look upon it as the fulleſt and moſt authentic account of the extent of human life, from the natural advantages of a fine climate, great temperance, continual exerciſe, &c. and renders it very evident that long-life, ſimply conſidered, and without the aſſiſtance of ſome method, either to retard, or to qualify its inconveniencies, ought by no means to be eſteemed a bleſſing; for what kind of death could the moſt barbarous tyrant invent, that would be ſo cruel, in the conſideration of a reaſonable perſon, as the lingering torments of ſuch a living death, as the oldeſt of theſe

old

old men went through? But ſtill this is an unanſwerable argument in the ſupport of our fundamental principle, that the human body is a machine that may be ſuſtained much longer than is commonly imagined. This may be done, either by natural or by artificial means. As to the firſt of theſe methods, we have found it where we ſhould have ſought it, with the greateſt probability, that is, amongſt ſavages, who, as they have animal life, and the pleaſures of the body only in view, ſo theſe, according to the oeconomy of Providence, lead to the utmoſt extenſion of life, of which, from the nature of its ſtructure, the human body, as a machine, is capable, and perhaps only capable, in ſuch a climate, and from ſuch a way of living [h].

BUT as we are very ſenſible that, with reſpect to machines, though they cannot outlaſt the materials of which they are compoſed, but muſt gradually

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[h] The difference between the aſſiſtances afforded by nature, are very well ſet forth by our author, and he very juſtly inſiſts upon the climate as the chief. It is obſerved by lord Bacon, that in mountainous countries the people live long, and the famous profeſſor Boerhaave was wont to obſerve, in his lectures, that he was well informed, that a certain Dutchman, who had built himſelf a houſe on the top of a very high mountain, at the Cape of Good-Hope, lived there in the enjoyment of a healthy old age, beyond the knowlege or remembrance of any of the colony: ſuch is the benefit of nature, but if we could perfectly diſcover whence, with reſpect to its operation on the body, the differences in air ariſe, we might poſſibly do ſomewhat in this reſpect by art, without ſcaling of mountains, or going to the Cape of Good-Hope.

waſte and decay by the action of the ſeveral parts of thoſe materials upon each other; yet by the aſſiſtance of art, even theſe materials may not only be made to laſt longer than they would otherwiſe do, but alſo to perform their offices with greater facility, and with fewer inconveniencies, than if they were unſkilfully managed. The watches of Tompion, Quare, or even of Graham, who has carried his art ſo much beyond any of his predeceſſors, will be ſubject to go wrong, to be injured, and at length ſpoiled, and that perhaps in a very ſhort time in the hands of ignorant perſons, ſuch as children, and women; that, in the cuſtody of prudent and careful people, might be preſerved in perfect order for an age or two, at leaſt; though, in ſpite of all the aſſiduity and caution poſſible, they would at laſt wear out. Hence, by parity of reaſon, we may diſcern how the machine of the body might be in like manner defended, both from external injuries, and internal decay, if a right method was once ſettled for that purpoſe; and that method purſued with proper diligence and attention. Such a method however is not to be looked for amongſt ſavages, but amongſt the wiſeſt, moſt learned, and politeſt nations, and even in them, amongſt thoſe only the moſt famed for prudence and knowlege [1].

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[1] It may be obſerved in ſupport of what is advanced in the text, that there are no two nations in the world ſo anxious about the preſervation of life as the Italians and the Chineſe; but, notwithſtanding this, it does not appear that they have made any very

IT is a thing, in ſome meaſure, amazing how ſtrangely, and how ſimply, the curioſity of mankind is commonly employed. We viſit fine palaces, beautiful gardens, and ſuch collections of rarities as become famous; and in ſurveying theſe, we ſeem to be very diligent and circumſpect; ſo that if called upon at a great diſtance of time, we can give very ſatisfactory accounts of the ſize of any of theſe magnificent buildings, the materials of which they are compoſed, the diſpoſition of their ſeveral parts, the advantages that ariſe from thence, and at leaſt the moſt apparent defects. In the gardens again, we note the walls, the walks, the wilderneſſes, the herbs, flowers, trees, canals, pavilions, &c. In thoſe repoſitories we can tell, upon reflection, what curious books there are, what antique ſtatues, what excellent pictures, and by what famous hands, what medals, and, in a word, whatever they contain. But how few are there that employ this curioſity, which is ſo capable not of extending only to ſuch a va-

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very great progreſs in the ſcience. Though there are abundance of rational things in the treatiſe of Cornaro, and many good rules might perhaps be picked out of the aphoriſms of the Chineſe phyſicians; yet, after all, they go no farther than giving wiſe cautions to prevent the waſting of life; whereas the great thing to be ſought, is a method of recruiting it. A lamp will not burn ſo ſoon, if protected from the air, as in a place where it is expoſed to the wind; but it would ſtill continue burning much longer, if conſtantly ſupplied with oil, though the veſſel and the wick were the ſame.

riety

riety of ſubjects, but of preſerving them alſo, ſo as to have them conſtantly ready for entertainment, or for uſe; I ſay, how few exerciſe this curioſity upon their own bodies, ſo as to become, in any tolerable degree, acquainted with the nature of the ſtructure, the diſpoſition of its parts, and the relation they have to each other; curioſity is doubtleſs a noble faculty of the ſoul, and is it not ſurpriſing that ſhe ſhould exerciſe it every where but at home? that with the fooliſh giddineſs of a young heir loaden with money, and light in wit, ſhe ſhould long to travel abroad, and run great riſks to ſee ſtrange ſights at a diſtance, without ever reflecting to how much better purpoſe her time and talents might be ſpent, in taking a cloſe view of her own concerns, in making a thorough enquiry into the title by which ſhe holds her poſſeſſions, and procuring an exact inventory of her own effects. It is for want of this, that like the travelling ſpendthrift, ſhe finds herſelf frequently called off, from following, at a vaſt intellectual expence, pleaſures totally foreign to her, to come and die a beggar at home. Health and happineſs are the great concerns of every man, we naturally wiſh theſe to our friends, and deſire them for ourſelves; we think of them with pleaſure, we ſpeak of them with rapture, and yet we very ſeldom ſeek them as we ought [k].

I HAVE

[k] We may eaſily ſatisfy ourſelves, as to the truth of this, by conſidering what prodigious improvements have been made in anatomy and phyſic during the two laſt centuries. But what this

I HAVE declined, as yet, ſpeaking of long-lived animals, upon which, however, the great lord Bacon has inſiſted much. Apollonius, if we may believe the writer of his life, diſcovered in Mount Caucaſus an extraordinary ſecret in natural hiſtory. There are apes there, it ſeems, which feed upon a kind of pepper, and theſe apes are eaten by old lions, to renew their ſtrength and make them young [1]. I muſt confeſs, I ſuſpect this to be rather an allegory than a fable, and I ſhould incline to interpret it thus; that lofty and ambitious ſpirits over-act the bodies in which they inhabit, and induce a premature old age, if this effect be not prevented by frequently unbending their ſpirits in the company of humorous and diverting people, who are well enough marked out by apes well ſeaſoned. Thus Ageſilaus, the famous king of Sparta, when he was extremely old, amuſed himſelf by playing with young children. The great Scipio diverted himſelf in the company of Terence, and Auguſtus had always about him the moſt ſprightly wits of Rome. Cardi-

this writer chiefly aims at, is to engage the reader's obſervation, as to the ſmall pains taken by the generality of people, even of thoſe who would be thought knowing and ſenſible, to make themſelves ſo far acquainted with the nature of the human oeconomy as to be able to take care of themſelves. It is a very common, but for all that, no idle ſaying, that every man at forty is either a fool or a phyſician, that is, with regard to himſelf; but I doubt, reckoning thus, the fools would carry it upon any conteſt, againſt the phyſicians, by a very great majority.

[1] Philoſtrat. in vit. Apollon. Tyan. lib. iv. c. i.

nal Richlieu had ſunk under the fatigues of his miniſtry, if from time to time he had not been relieved by the humorous buffoonry of Boiſrobert. Lewis XIV. was as delicate in his amuſements as great in his councils, and ſhewed as true judgment in approving a play of Moliere's, as a project of Louvois. We are not therefore to underſtand the antients literally, when they deliver to us thoſe ſtories which appear to us incredible. But to return to long-lived animals.

IT is certain that eagles arrive at a great age, and that they preſerve, almoſt as long as they live, that prodigious ſtrength which diſtinguiſhes them from other birds. We know too, that the eagle renews his plumage annually, and it is not eaſy to conceive how this ſhould be done without a total change of its juices. The ſtag is another long-lived animal, though I cannot believe many of the ſtories that are told about it. I mention it only, that I may obſerve that it annually caſt its horns, which is another proof of the renewal of animal juices. But this is ſtill more conſpicuous in the viper, which in the ſpring caſts it coat, and comes abroad youthful as the year. If the eagle, the ſtag, and the viper, were not common to every climate, I make no doubt that the facts related of them would be treated as fables; but as they happen every day, and immediately under our eyes, we are obliged to own them for truths. Yet what uſe have we made of theſe truths? who can aſſign the cauſes why theſe animals

live

live longer than others; or, how it comes to paſs, that nature grants them this privilege of rejuveneſcency? yet ſuch an enquiry might repay our induſtry abundantly [m]! It is ſaid, that we learned phyſic from animals, that dogs taught us the uſe of emetics, and that birds put us in the head of gliſters. If they were our tutors in the lower forms of phyſic, why ſhould we diſdain their inſtruction in this ſublimer part of the ſcience?

It is not only the inhabitants of the land and air that attain to ſuch vaſt ages, ſuch as dwell in the waters ſeem to have ſtill a larger ſhare of life, of which I will give you one well atteſted inſtance out of many. In the year 1497, in a fiſh pond in Suabia, near Huilprin in Germany, they took a carp of a prodigious ſize, which had in his ear a ring of copper, with theſe words in Latin. "I am the firſt fiſh that "was put into this pond by the hands of Frederick "II. governor of the world, the 5th of October "1230." This carp appeared to have lived 259 years, and probably might have lived much longer, had he not been thus taken out. I cannot apprehend that much uſe will ever be made of examples of this ſort, becauſe fiſhes live in another medium, and ſeem to have their lives regulated by laws different from thoſe of other animals [n]. We

[m] Aldrovand. Ornitholog. Geſner de Avibus, lib. iii. Ariſtot. de Animalibus.

[n] Johnſton. Hiſt. Natur.

may ſay of them, that if they do not, like the eagle, renew their vigour, yet they ſeem never to grow old, or, to expreſs myſelf more clearly, age with them ſeems exempt from infirmities. The broken claw of a lobſter grows again, which, if ſeriouſly conſidered, is very wonderful, and it is generally believed that moſt fiſhes grow as long as they live, which, if true, is not eaſily accounted for.

WHAT I would infer from all theſe hints, is no more than this, that nature has furniſhed us with numerous examples of what we ſeek, long life with the preſervation of ſtrength. We ſee this daily in birds, and in beaſts, in fiſh, and in reptiles, and yet we ſit down ſatisfied that ſpeedy old age, and immature death, belong to us by the law of nature. Where is the juſtice, where is the conſiſtency of this; eſpecially, if we conſider, that the fleſh of many long-lived animals has a quality wonderfully reſtorative? We know that mighty things have been done by feeding upon vipers, and not much leſs by living upon ſhell-fiſh; the bone of a ſtag's heart is held to be a very high cordial, the reaſon of which is ſomething ſingular, and therefore I will take notice of it *. This bone is the ſtrongeſt proof

* The bone of a ſtag's heart enters into all the receipts of Bacon the monk, as well as into all thoſe that are mentioned by the Arabian phyſicians; and as they tranſcribe Greek authors, it is eaſy to ſee that this medicine was of very great antiquity.

of the ſtag's longevity, for it is nothing elſe but the root of the aorta, grown bony through a long ſeries of years. We are therefore in the wrong, to take it for granted that nature has paſſed ſuch a ſentence upon us, when the record of experience proves directly the contrary, and when we ſo plainly ſee that the ſeeds of long-life are in long-lived creatures. But we paſs this ſentence, and execute it upon ourſelves. We ſit down not patient, but dejected, under what we eſteem a common calamity, and deſire rather to make the moſt of a ſhort life, than to fatigue ourſelves with the ſtudy of the means by which it might be prolonged.

I HAD almoſt forgot an objection which has been ſtarted from a ſuppoſed law of nature, with reſpect to animals, viz. that thoſe have their appointed times, and that moſt of them are but of very ſhort periods; the great lord Bacon hath taken much pains to make this out, though with a better view than the ſupporting ſuch an objection; but, after all, I very much doubt the matter of fact, viz. that there are any ſuch immutable laws, that animals cannot tranſgreſs. For inſtance, it is ſaid, that the age of a horſe, I mean his extreme age, is twenty, or twenty-four; hiſtory furniſhes us with inſtances that contradict this. I will mention but one, Mezeray tells us, that a certain duke of Gaſcogny paid his homage to the king of Burgundy on a horſe that was an hundred years old, and which was ſtill vigorous and

full of mettle [p]. But admitting the matter of fact, where lies the force of the objection? Some animals reach ten, and others, it is confeſſed, live much beyond a hundred; what has this to do with the life of man? why ſhould it prove that we are ſtinted to fourſcore, more than that we have it in our power to live as long as ſtags and eagles. It may be ſaid, that there is a certain gradation in theſe periods, and that as each animal has its aſſigned term, ſo likewiſe has man. But we have proved the contrary of this, by all the methods of argumentation yet invented; we ſhewed it from ſcripture, from reaſon, from experience; and if all this is not ſufficient to baffle a notion founded only on fancy, why, let thoſe who are fond of it enjoy it. I do not think that life ought to be forced upon people, my creed goes no further than this, "that if we ſeek we may "find, if we knock it will be opened;" and this I am led to ſay, becauſe I find it ſo in other purſuits, where men follow nature, and not their own notions. What mighty diſcoveries hath the Newtonian philoſophy afforded, which had been for ever hid from men, if they had continued to follow the viſions of Deſcartes? how much more certain the aſtronomy of our times than that of our anceſtors? yet ſome ſay, that all theſe diſcoveries are only loſt truths revived. Be it ſo, and let us return to the

[p] Hiſtoire Abregé de France, tom. i. p. 401.

ſearch

ſearch of that truth which was known to Hermippus, and which has been ſo long loſt to us.

If, therefore, after all that has been ſaid, there remain yet any doubts upon the mind of the reader, we ſhall endeavour by all means to remove theſe, as well for the ſake of his ſatisfaction, as that, after ſo much pains already taken, we may not fail in our attempt, and have this diſſertation conſidered only as a literary amuſement; whereas, we intend it as a ſerious and uſeful diſcourſe. The ancients, who ſeem to have ſtudied this matter with the greateſt aſſiduity, and whoſe opinions, generally ſpeaking, on mature examination, appear not altogether unreaſonable to the moderns; obſerve with reſpect to the cauſes of old age, that they are chiefly three. Firſt, the circumambient air, which dries up the natural moiſture in man, at the ſame time that the innate heat of the body conſumes it, as the neceſſary ſubſtance on which the flame of life muſt feed. The ſecond is the toil and motion of the body, which likewiſe waſtes that aerial humidity which is ſo neceſſary to health and life; and the laſt, the paſſions of the mind, which, according to the ſentiments of the learned Avicenna, have greater influence than both the other cauſes taken together, which will ſeem extremely reaſonable, if we conſider how cloſe a connection there is between the paſſions of the mind, and the motion of the animal ſpirits, which particularly appears in madneſs, when we compare the cir-

cumſtances attending it, as a diſeaſe of the mind; with thoſe by which it alſo appears to be a bodily diſtemper.

SUCH as are acquainted with that myſterious kind of philoſophy, which was in the higheſt credit with the learned vulgar of the laſt age, and which is now as unreaſonably diſcredited amongſt the ſame people, and regared only by ſuch as enquire after truths, and not received opinions; this philoſophy, I ſay, teaches us, that there is a great correſpondence between the body of the earth, and the body of man, whence the patrons of this doctrine were wont to call the latter the little world, and the former the great one. Now, though there is ſomething very fanciful in their way of treating this matter, yet the notion in itſelf is very juſt, and whoever examines it carefully, will find that the general laws of the univerſe, are alſo the particular laws of all the different kind of bodies in it; and hence it comes to paſs, that as man ſuffers, and is deſtroyed for want of moiſture, ſo this is like to be the caſe of the world too, or at leaſt would be the caſe, if it did not receive foreign ſupplies; which the judicious Sir Iſaac Newton ſuppoſes it does from the tails of comets, the watery vapours of which he imagines communicate with our atmoſphere for that purpoſe [q].

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[q] Philoſoph. Natural. Princip. Mathem. lib iii.

THIS

THIS we muſt allow to be a rational and probable account of what for many ages puzzled the underſtanding of all mankind; and if ſo wonderful a method as this is, be neceſſary to ſupply the earth with moiſture, why ſhould we think it ſtrange that a new, and in ſome meaſure unaccuſtomed way, ſhould be the fitteſt for repairing that humidity, which is ſo neceſſary to the well being of the human body. The univerſe is under the ſpecial care and direction of its infinitely wiſe Creator, who at certain ſeaſons therefore has provided it with ſuch requiſite ſupplies; but the bodies of men are, in this reſpect, left to their own care, and if the materials be within our own reach, and our faculties are ſtronge nough to diſcover them, we have no more a right to complain that the ſecret of preſerving long life is not diſcovered to us, than that the art of baking bread, of melting ores, and refining metals, or indeed any other art, was not revealed to our anceſtors in the earlieſt ages of the world, but left to be the reward of their future induſtry and ſagacity. The furniture of man's mind, and the ſtructure of his body, are both of them ſuch, that if he has any reaſon to complain, it muſt be of himſelf; and his reflections upon Providence are not only impious, but ridiculous. He has it abſolutely in his power to be eaſy and happy, if he pleaſes. Health will always attend on temperance, ſteadily purſued, as Galen aſſerts in his works, and manifeſted in himſelf, by living to upwards of an hundred

hundred, without being attacked either by acute or chronic diſeaſes. Riches are not indeed within every man's reach, but there is ſomething always at hand infinitely more valuable than wealth, I mean content. If to theſe bleſſings we would add length of days, why that too, according to this hypotheſis is in our power, and depends on our finding out a proper ſupply of the aerial humidity before-mentioned.

WE have now the clue in our hand, and nothing can hinder us from extricating ourſelves from this labyrinth of doubts, about the proper method of obtaining this ſupply, but our own negligence and want of attention. We ought to remember that heat and moiſture are, from the very beginning, the principles of human life. Let us reflect then, and ſee if we cannot diſcover whence theſe principles ariſe. There is, I think, very little difficulty in this caſe, that of heat is derived from the male, that of moiſture from the female. It is equally unneceſſary and unbecoming me to introduce a treatiſe of generation in a work like this; it is ſufficient that I put my readers in mind, that the enlargement of the fœtus in the womb requires a very extraordinary degree of moiſture in all reſpects, and that this is entirely derived to it from its mother. The growth of an infant is ſurpriſingly quick, and this is owing to the ſtrength of the vital flame, the conſtant ſupply of a proper humidity, and the not being expoſed to

thoſe accidents which have been before-mentioned, I man the action of the circumambient air, bodily motion, and the paſſions of the mind, from all which, children, while in the womb, are in a great meaſure free. This, I think, is ſo extremely clear, and plain, that it is ſimply impoſſible for a man to be in any perplexity about it, and therefore I ſhall proceed to the next ſtage of life, and enquire into the method which is therein purſued by nature.

In the ſtate of infancy, there is likewiſe an extraordinary proviſion neceſſary of this humid matter, not only ſufficient for performing the ordinary functions of animal life, but alſo to facilitate the growth of the child, and this too proceeds from the mother. Nature has furniſhed her with breaſts, and with milk, which is the moſt ſuitable nutriment, that, under ſuch circumſtances, the human body can receive; and in extreme old age, when the body is a ſecond time reduced to the feebleneſs of infancy, milk and eſpecially women's milk, is found to be of very great uſe, and, in conſumptive caſes alſo, is allowed to be a moſt admirable reſtorative. Hence, I think, it plainly appears that the radical moiſture, ſo neceſſary to ſupply the flame of life, and to keep it not only alive, but vigorous and clear, is to be ſought in woman. I foreſee one great objection that may be made to this, viz. that I inſiſt not on the breath or effluvia of women, but of virgins. Yet weigh the caſes thoroughly, and you will find all that I have advanced

advanced very conſiſtent. The nouriſhment of a child in the womb, and an infant at the breaſt, is a nouriſhment no way fit for perſons in years, and therefore I approve what Bacon delivers from the Arabian phyſicians, viz. that milk is an improper diet for old men. This hinders not its being uſeful when people are quite worn out, for that may furniſh ſtrength to a dying flame, that would be of no ſervice to a lamp in its ordinary ſituation. Perſons in the laſt ſtage of life are frequently emaciated, and in this caſe milk may help; but ſtill, as there is a wide difference between the natural and gradual decay of the human body, and what the phyſicians call a conſumption, there muſt be conſequently a difference in their cure. Thus, from certain and almoſt ſelf-evident principles, I have eſtabliſhed the reaſonableneſs of this propoſition, that the breath and inſenſible perſpiration of virgins in a young and healthy ſtate, muſt be very ſalutary for old men, and may very probably be a means of protecting them from thoſe infirmities which uſually attend an advanced age. Now, in reſpect to this, it matters not at all, whether the inſcription I ſet out with be founded in truth or not, neither is it requiſite to believe that I have hit exactly on the method uſed by Hermippus. The ſingle point in queſtion is, whether I have ſhewn that ſenſe, in which I take this inſcription, to be agreeable to the dictates of reaſon, and the laws of nature; and

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as to this, every reader muſt decide for himſelf. Before he does this, there is another ſort of evidence that he ought to hear, and which for the ſake of truth, I ſhall readily produce.

THERE are two ſorts of people whoſe intereſt it is particularly to decry this doctrine, on a ſuppoſition that it is deſtructive of their own, to which they are prodigiouſly, and perhaps unreaſonably, addicted: I mean the aſtrologers and hermetic philoſophers. I ſhall examine what both may object, rather for the entertainment and ſatisfaction, than for the conviction of the wiſer part of the world, who are already well enough appriſed of the credit due to theſe virtuoſi; and when I have done this, I ſhall draw to a ſpeedy concluſion, from an aſſurance that nothing more can be neceſſary to eſtabliſh the probability of this method for preſerving health and life, and for defending our bodies from the infirmities of old age as long as their conſtitutions will permit.

THE modern patrons of aſtrology, for ſuch it ſeems there are, will probably pretend that this notion of Hermippus was a mere fancy, and that if he really reached to an age ſo advanced, it was not through the aſſiſtance derived from the breath of virgins, but from the happy poſition of the heavenly bodies at the time of his birth. It is, however, lucky for me,

me, that they can never make good this objection; becauſe I preſume their art will not furniſh them with the means of conſtructing any ſcheme of his nativity. I know they may plead the author of Thomas Aquinas [r], and other great men who have given in to theſe opinions. I know too that they may produce ſome extraordinary inſtances of the verification of aſtrological predictions; eſpecially thoſe of Baſil, who was ſo famous at Florence, and of La Broſſe, at Paris, who were particularly happy in gueſſing at future events, and in having their predictions recorded by hiſtorians of credit.

THE former of theſe foretold to Coſmo de Medici, then a private citizen at Florence, that he would attain ſome very high dignity, is as much as the aſcendant of his nativity was adorned with the ſame propitious aſpects, as thoſe of the emperors Auguſtus, and Charles V. had been; and he was accordingly raiſed to the dukedom of Tuſcany, in the month of January 1434 [s]. The ſame Greek aſtrologer did, with equal capacity, foretell the death of prince Alexander de Medici, and this with ſuch confidence, as to paint out the perſons by whoſe hand he ſhould

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[r] One ſtrong paſſage, among many in his writings, runs thus, Qui ſciret virtutes cælorum et ſtellarum dum res aliqua naſcitur poſſet judicare de natura rei, licet hoc neceſſitatem non imponat, et poſcet impediri per accidens. D. Tho. ſecundo de generatione.

[s] Dinoth. Memorab. lib. vi. p. 390.

die, and whom he affirmed to be that prince's intimate and familiar friend; of a ſlender habit of body, a ſmall face, and ſwarthy complexion, and who, with a reſerved ſilence, was almoſt inſociable to all perſons in the court; by which deſcription he did almoſt point out with the finger Laurence de Medici, who murdered prince Alexander in his bed-chamber, contrary to all the laws of conſanguinity and hoſpitality, in the year 1537 [t]. But the great misfortune is, that in thoſe days it was ſhrewdly ſuſpected, that theſe pretended ſages had better and more certain methods of penetrating into conſpiracies than are afforded by aſtrological means; and I muſt confeſs myſelf inclined to ſuſpect, from the very manner in which this prediction was delivered, that Baſil was employed to caution prince Alexander againſt his couſin Lawrence, and that for want of penetration, he fell into that ſnare which he might otherwiſe have avoided.

THE inſtance of La Broſſe is more to the purpoſe, becauſe better ſupported; indeed I think that it is one of the beſt atteſted ſtories of its kind. The baron de Biron, afterwards the famous marſhal of that name, being under ſome difficulty about a duel, went to La Broſſe, and carried him a ſcheme of his nativity, but told him it was that of a friend of his; the aſtrologer having conſidered the ſcheme, aſſur-

[t] Jovii Elog. p. 320.

ed

ed him, that the perſon whoſe nativity it was would infallibly be a great man; nay, that he might even come to be a king, but for the caput algol, pointing to the figure of the dragon's head in the ſcheme. M. de Biron, who did not underſtand the term, inſiſted on a clearer account; why then, replied La Broſſe, through a deſire of being a king, this man will do ſomething that will coſt him his head. Provoked at which anſwer, the baron beat him unmercifully; but he lived to fulfil his prediction, having his head cut off, as all the world knows, for a conſpiracy againſt Henry IV. [u].

IT has been, I hear, ſuggeſted, that I deliberately left out of this collection, an inſtance that made moſt againſt my ſyſtem, by clearly proving that aſtrology is not ſo incertain a thing as ſome repreſent it, and that as the able men in that ſcience cannot only predict the time, but the manner of the perſon's death, therefore all that I have advanced becomes very doubtful and precarious, at leaſt when brought into compariſon with the dictates of this infallible ſcience. I might alledge various things in diſproof of this charge, ſuch as that I have not declared in direct terms againſt aſtrology, denied its having any principles, or derided ſuch as have either ſtudied it, or given credit to thoſe who were converſant in its doctrines. But becauſe I love to go to the bottom

[u] Invent. Gen. de France, par M. de Serres, p. 1051.

of

of things, I am desirous that my readers should be acquainted with all that can be said on any side the question; I will produce this very relation which I am said to have concealed, and that with all the advantages that it derives from the skill of the ingenious person from whom I received it, with a challenge to answer it [x].

Antiochus Tibertus was one of the most famous astrologers of the fifteenth century, and though his death was very unhappy, yet it ought to render his memory immortal. He was a native of the town of Catena in Romagna. A certain officer carried him to Paris, where he studied, and there following the bent of his genius, he applied himself to the occult sciences, or rather to all the branches of that secret and curious art, which is generally called natural magick. He believed it had been decryed, from its having been mostly in the hands of bold, ignorant, and profligate people, and he thought to restore its credit, by giving it all the ornaments and advantages that could be possibly derived from physic, mathematics, natural philosophy, history, and the fine arts, of which he was a perfect master. The pains he took in this respect, were attended with rather more success than he promised himself; so that before he quitted France, he had acquired a very high reputation, and

[x] Les Anecdotes de Florence; ou l'Histoire Secrete, de la Maison de Medicis, p. 318.

was conſidered as the man beſt ſkilled in every kind of divination, to which there wanted not a multitude of pretenders at that time.

UPON his return to his native country, where that ſort of knowlege was in the higheſt credit, he found it neceſſary, for his own ſecurity, to ingratiate himſelf with ſome of the petty tyrants, or little princes, that were poſſeſſed of the ſeveral cities and territories in Italy, nor was it long before he gained the confidence of Pandolfo Malateſta, at that time ſovereign of Remini, with whom he lived in the greateſt eaſe and credit [y]. His reputation was quickly raiſed to ſuch a height, as well by the curious books he publiſhed on the principles of chyromancy, phy-

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[y] It will not be improper to put the reader in mind that, at this juncture, when almoſt all the fruitful country of Italy was cantoned out amongſt a multitude of pretty tyrants, this ſpirit of divining, and of giving credit to divination, was at its greateſt height; neither is it in the leaſt difficult to diſcern the cauſe of this. When the ſpirits of mankind are broken and dejected, as muſt always be the caſe, when they languiſh under ſlavery, they cannot but incline to find out, by any means, when the great evils they ſuffer ſhall have an end; and on the other hand, as tyrants are conſtantly jealous and ſuſpicious, they too are exceſſively prone to pry into the rolls of deſtiny, to learn, if poſſible, whence their danger may come, and of whom, amongſt all they fear, they have moſt reaſon to be afraid. We need not be ſurpriſed, therefore, that in ſuch conjunctures, aſtrologers, necromancers, and figure-flingers, are in credit; for bad men only are ſolicitous about their fortune, the good find occupation ſufficient in regulating their morals.

ſiognomy,

ſiognomy, and pyromancy, as by the happy verification of many of his predictions, that his houſe was continually thronged, either with viſitors, who were perſons of diſtinction, or clients that came to him for advice; ſo that in a very ſhort time he acquired a competent fortune, and as he was eſteemed, courted, and beloved, by perſons of the higheſt rank, he might well have promiſed himſelf a comfortable journey through life, and a peaceable paſſage out of it, in a good old age. But fate, it ſeems, had otherwiſe decreed, nor were the decrees of fate any ſecrets to Antiochus Tibertus. In a word, he has eſtabliſhed his fame with poſterity, upon three inconteſtable predictions, one with reſpect to his moſt intimate friend, another in regard to himſelf, and the third relating to the prince who was his patron, all of them highly improbable at the time they were delivered, all inſcrutable by the rules of human policy, or prudence, and yet all exactly accompliſhed.

THIS friend of his was Guido de Bogni, one of the greateſt captains of his time, as well as one of the braveſt and boldeſt men that ever lived. He was very earneſt with Tibertus, to reveal to him the ſecret of his deſtiny, and after conſulting the lines in his hand, this great maſter of his art declared, that he would certainly loſe his life by the hand of one of his beſt friends, upon an ill-grounded ſuſpicion. Some time after this, Tibertus calculated his own nativity, and made no ſcruple of declaring,

that he ſhould loſe his head upon the ſcaffold. His patron Pandolfo de Malateſta would likewiſe have his fortune told, which Tibertus would willingly have declined, but finding that impracticable, he would not hazard his own credit, and that of his art, by telling him a falſity; and therefore, tho' he was at that time the richeſt prince in all Italy, he ventured to acquaint him, that, after ſuffering great want, he would die in the common hoſpital at Bologna. Not long after this, Guido de Bogni was made commander in chief of the forces of Pandolfo de Malateſta, upon which the count de Bentivoglio, who was father-in-law to that prince, wrote him a letter, in which he aſſured him, that he had made a ſhepherd of the wolf, and that Bogni was actually intriguing with the pope, and had promiſed to deliver up the city of Remini whenever he deſired it. The tyrants of Italy were never men of much ceremony, and therefore Malateſta, as ſoon as he had this information, made a great entertainment, to which he invited all his favourites, and amongſt the reſt, Guido de Bogni and Tibertus. At this ſupper Guido was ſtabbed, and as it was ſuſpected that Tibertus, from his great intimacy with him, might have ſome ſhare in, or at leaſt knowlege of, the conſpiracy, he was thrown into a dungeon, and loaded with irons [z].

IT

[z] One ſees from hence, that the hatred of tyrants is very little, if at all more dangerous than their friendſhip. It is the maxim of a famous Chineſe philoſopher, and a maxim that deſerves to be

IT may be eaſily conceived, that our aſtrologer paſſed his time but unpleaſantly in this diſmal ſituation, and therefore one cannot be at all ſurpriſed that he ſhould lay hold of the firſt opportunity of making his eſcape. It ſeems the goaler, to whoſe care Tibertus was committed, had a daughter of a milder and more compaſſionate diſpoſition than might have been expected, conſidering the ſire from whom ſhe ſprung. To this fair damſel the ſage addreſſed himſelf in this time of his diſtreſs, and ſo effectually wrought upon her gentle heart, that ſhe agreed to furniſh him with the means of breaking out of his dungeon into the caſtle ditch, from whence he might eaſily eſcape. In the mean time, count Bentivoglio had diſcovered that the information he gave his ſon-in-law was ill founded, and of this he ſent him an account, as ſoon as it was in his power. Malateſta was infinitely aſtoniſhed and affected with this news. It was impoſſible to recal his unfortunate general, Guido de Bogni, from the grave, but he gave immediate orders for ſetting Tibertus at liberty.

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be written in letters of gold; "Be not obliged by the wicked." It is impoſſible to run a greater hazard than he does, who receives good turns from a bad man, becauſe, ſome time or other, it muſt bring him under this dilemma, that either he muſt do an unbecoming action, or draw upon himſelf the imputation of ingratitude. The wiſeſt of the ancient philoſophers were, for this reaſon, afraid of the careſſes of tyrants, and choſe rather to live in virtuous poverty, than to receive wealth from thoſe who acquired it by iniquity.

Thoſe who brought the orders came juſt at the fall of night, and preciſely at the time that the aſtrologer had forced his paſſage into the ditch, where, after a little ſearch, they found him. When this was reported to the tyrant, his ſuſpicions returned upon him with redoubled violence, and recollecting at the ſame time the prediction of Antiochus, that he ſhould be deprived of his principality before his death, he concluded, that the firſt information could not be groundleſs; but that without doubt, the aſtrologer muſt be embarked in ſome ſuch pernicious deſign. To free himſelf therefore from theſe apprehenſions, he gave orders that the next morning Antiochus Tibertus ſhould be beheaded before the priſon gate; and thus the ſecond prediction was verified, as well as the firſt, in a manner equally ſtrange, and out of the reach of human foreſight to penetrate, unaſſiſted by the rules of art. Let us now proceed to the third, which happened not long after.

IT is to be obſerved, that tho' the intelligence of the count de Bentivoglio proved falſe, with reſpect to the perſons concerned, which very probably was the effects of his own conjecture, yet his information was right enough in the main; for a conſpiracy was actually carrying on to put Remini into the hands of the pope, and it was accordingly ſeized by the duke de Valentinois not long after; but, in the confuſion which this occaſioned, Pandolfo Malateſta made his eſcape. He fled for ſome time from place to place,

vigorouſly

vigorouſly proſecuted by his enemies, and meeting, as is generally the caſe of tyrants, with very few friends; at length, having endeavoured to ſow diſſention amongſt his own children, he was abandoned by them, and conſequently by every body elſe, inſomuch, that falling ill of a languiſhing diſeaſe at Bologna, where no body cared to take him in, he was at laſt carried to the hoſpital, where he dragged out the remainder of his days in penury and pain, and at laſt died of his diſeaſe as Tibertus had foretold.

SUCH is is the relation which, it is ſaid, I would have ſuppreſſed; but whoever conſiders it maturely, will, I am perſuaded, ſee no great cauſe to juſtify ſuch a ſuppoſition. There is nothing in my ſyſtem that carries things ſo far as to pretend to avert ſuch ſtrange ſtrokes of fortune, or to ſecure men from violent death; ſo that in this reſpect none of theſe hiſtories, how well atteſted ſoever, affect any thing that I have advanced. As to the ſkill of Antiochus Tibertus, I can ſay nothing to it, except this, that it is a very ſingular, and, at the ſame time, a very uſeleſs ſcience, that teaches men the diſcovery of their own and other people's misfortunes, and, at the ſame time, affords them no light how to avoid them. I might likewiſe add, if I had an inclination to fall out with the aſtrologers, that even theſe are no deciſive proof as to the certainty of this ſcience; for very learned divines have aſſerted, that Providence ſometimes ſuffers vain predictions to be ful-

filled, as a juſt puniſhment on thoſe who pretend to penetrate into the ſecrets of heaven, or who place a confidence in ſuch pretenders [a]. Now, to ſay the truth, if we conſider how cloſely ſuitable judgments purſue

[a] It would be no difficult thing to aſſemble a multitude of hiſtorical facts in ſupport of that ſentiment, which, tho' our author will not undertake to defend, he ſeems plainly enough to approve. One good inſtance, however, may do as well as twenty, and it ſo falls out, that a very remarkable one is to be met with very near the time in which the celebrated Tibertus flouriſhed. The cardinal Adrian de Corneto made a very conſiderable figure in the court of Rome, under the pontificate of Leo the tenth. He was a native of the town from whence he took his name, but his parents were ſo poor, that what his true name was, appears not from hiſtory. A ſchoolmaſter gave him his learning gratis, and he improved this ſo well, that he paſſed through all ſtations as an eccleſiaſtic, without any other recommendation than his merit. After attaining the purple, he went to viſit his native town, and hearing of a magician that was very famous, who lived in a cottage in the midſt of the Appennines, he diſguiſed himſelf in the habit of an artificer, and went to conſult him. He carried with him the horoſcopes of ſeveral perſons with whom he was intimately acquainted, and the aſtrologer having anſwered with ſurpriſing accuracy, in reference to theſe people, he at length put his own horoſcope into his hand, and aſked him what he thought might befal the perſon to whom it belonged. The wizard conſidered it a little, and then replied, if this be the nativity of a man, he will certainly be a cardinal, if of a woman, ſhe will be very near a throne, if ſhe does not ſit on one. This was enough upon that head. Corneto changed the ſubject, by aſking him how long he thought the pope would live, and who would ſucceed him? The pope, returned the artiſt, is young, but he will not live long for all that; his death will occaſion a great faction, but at

purſue almoſt every kind of habitual crimes, and how often predictions are fulfilled by their own conſequences, we ſhall find it no very eaſy matter to refute the opinion of theſe divines, which, however, I do not undertake to maintain; all I pretend to ſay farther on this head, is no more than this, that the curioſity and vigilance of the learned, in the two laſt ages, though they have contributed ſo much to the improvement of geometry, aſtronomy, and phyſic, have been ſo far from doing the like ſervice to aſtrology, that, on the contrary, they have brought it into general diſcredit, from whence I am perſuaded, that it will not be very ſuddenly retrieved, though I am not ignorant that, ſecretly, it is ſtill but too much confided in by many.

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at length the cardinals will chooſe on of their brethren, whoſe name is Adrian, a man of mean birth, who has riſen through all the dignities of the church, purely by his own merit; who has but one benefice at the time of his election, and who will be then preciſely in the ſixtieth year of his age. As there was no perſon in the ſacred college of the name of Adrian at that time but himſelf, and as this prediction ſuited him in every particular, Corneto took it for granted that he was the perſon, and moſt ungratefully entered into a conſpiracy againſt pope Leo, who was both his patron and his prince; which being diſcovered, he was forced to fly into his own country, diſguiſed in the habit of a carpenter, where he ſuffered all the want and miſery he deſerved. The prediction, however, in every circumſtance, was fulfilled in the famous cardinal Adrian, who was preceptor to the emperor Charles the fifth, and who at this time was not honoured with the purple.

YET,

YET, however, theſe ſort of notions have been diſcountenanced by the prevailing of experimental philoſophy, and true ſcience; where a prince gives ear to his own praiſes, there will never be wanting ſuch as will adopt aſtrological ſchemes, as well as other methods, to ſooth his vanity. Nothing is eaſier than to give ſuch a turn to a piece of this nature; men of ſprightly parts know how to dreſs up the face of heaven upon ſuch an occaſion, and to diſpoſe properly of all the ſigns and planets, ſo as to raiſe mighty expectations in the world, as well as the higheſt pleaſure in the mind of the prince they flatter.

SUCH were the favourable influences of the celeſtial orbs, at the birth of the late Lewis XIV. king of France. The genethliac ſyſtem may be ſeen in one of the medals that compoſe the hiſtory of that reign. The gentlemen of the royal academy of inſcriptions have calulated the preciſe poſition of the planets, at the moment of the birth of that prince; round about this curious medal, one ſees the twelve ſigns of the Zodiac, forming the twelve houſes, of this ſyſtem the ſeven planets appear in the ſame degrees they occupied at that time; the ſun which gives perfection to the other planets, is in the mid heaven; Mars, the lord of the aſcendant, in reception with Jupiter, the protector of life, and this is what they call the greater fortune; Saturn, the enemy of nature,

ture, is in his dignities, which makes him leſs malevolent; the Moon is in conjunction with Venus and Mercury, in his little houſe of predilection, to ten degrees of the ſun out of combuſtion, and enlightened by his rays, gives a ſuperiority of genius in the moſt difficult and moſt important enterprizes, which his being in quartile with Mars, is not capable to abate. The nativity of Lewis XIV. was figured in the middle of the medal, by a riſing-ſun, the king is placed in the chariot of that glorious planet of which Ovid has given us the deſcription. This chariot is drawn by four horſes, guided by Victory, the inſcription is in theſe words: Ortus Solis Gallici, "The riſing of the Gallic ſun;" and the exergue contains theſe other Latin words: Septembris quinto, minutis 38 ante meridiem, 1638. "The "5th of September, 38 minutes before noon, 1638."

I MUST confeſs, that this is a pretty contrivance, and ingeniouſly put together; yet I dare ſay, that none of the learned gentlemen concerned in framing this medal ventured to predict any of the clouds that obſcured their ſun. No, they were too great courtiers for that. But if this famous medal gives reputation to aſtrology, I ſhall venture to lay down a few obſervation, which will free my doctrine from all inconveniences. I obſerve then, that as the happieſt nativities admit of natural cauſes, to co-operate in bringing about what they portend, ſo it is not at all improbable that, if by ſome lucky accident we could

could gain a ſight of the horoſcope of Hermippus, it would ſhew us that Mercury, well poſited at the time of his birth, and beheld by Luna with a favourable aſpect, cauſed his diſcovery of this mighty ſecret, and enabled him to make ſuch a uſe of the breath of virgins, that no man ever thought of before. If the aſtrologers are content to grant me this, I am willing to compromiſe the matter, and which, I think, is as much as they can expect, to allow this doctrine of his and mine to be derived from the ſtars. But, if they are ſo tenacious of their own notions, as not to accept of ſo fair an offer, I ſhall recur to my firſt principles, and deny abſolutely the certainty of their art, and demand as good reaſons for the credit of aſtrology as I have produced in favour of my own ſyſtem, before I enter the liſts with them. Affirmation is nothing in this age, wherein men expect proofs for every thing. Let them ſhew us then that they can predict an earthquake, whirlwind, or ſo much as an irruption of mount Ætna; nay, let them but mark the rainy and fair days for a whole year, in any climate in Europe, and I will be content that their aſſertions weigh down my evidence; and that the long-life of Hermippus ſhall be aſcribed to a happy conjunction of humid ſtars in the ſign Virgo, which was the interpretation once offered me by a learned aſtrologer of this inſcription, and which, together with my own ſentiments, I freely ſubmit to the judgment of the impartial reader.

SUCH as ſeek after truth, diſguiſe nothing, and are ſo far from being afraid of ſeeing their opinion canvaſſed, and even refuted, that, on the contrary, nothing pleaſes them better, becauſe they are ſtill gainers by the diſpute; ſince, when truth is once diſcovered, they have as much right to it as he who found it. In the preſent caſe, if this treatiſe of mine ſhould ſtir up any wiſer man to look for a better ſolution of the problem I have ſtated, and he ſhould luckily fall on the genuine method of Hermippus, he could not rejoice at it more than I, nor would he find any one more willing to own, or to applaud his ingenuity. Let us read, let us meditate, let us diſpute, but all for the ſake of truth, which is the great property of mankind, conſtitutes all our happineſs, and which it is therefore our common intereſt to purſue. The point I have now in view is to diſcover the means of prolonging life, without feeling the infirmities of age; to the diſcovery of which, if the publication of this treatiſe ſhall any way contribute, not my end only, but the end of mankind is anſwered, and a moſt noble point of ſcience will be illuſtrated, from what many might at firſt eſteem an idle diſpute.

I SHALL not treat the hermetic philoſophers altogether ſo briſkly as I have done the aſtrologers; becauſe, without doubt, there have been amongſt them many very excellent perſons. I cannot take upon

upon me to ſay when they began to lay claim to the univerſal medicine, by which they pretend to preſerve life for many centuries, at leaſt, of which they ſay Artephius was an inſtance, who lived by the uſe of it to the age of 300, or, as ſome ſay, above 1000. This is certain that the ſociety of Roſicrucians openly claimed it as one of the privileges of their illuſtrious body. Peter Mormius, who, for ought I know, was one of the laſt of them that appeared in public, reduced their high pretenſions, which at firſt were very extenſive, to the poſſeſſion of three ſecrets. Of theſe the firſt was the perpetual motion; the ſecond, the art of tranſmuting metals; and the third, the univerſal medicine. In the book publiſhed by this Mormius, there are abundance of curious things, tho' he does not ſufficiently explain himſelf eſpecially upon the laſt ſubject [b]. It is, however, well enough known that theſe Illuminati aſſerted, that they had a power of prolonging their lives for many ages; nor is it very clear from their writings, whether what they are pleaſed to call the philoſo-

[b] This Mormius went into Holland in the year 1630, where he demanded an audience of the States-general, in order to tender them certain propoſitions from the fraternity of Roſicrucians, which they refuſed to hear; this did not, however, hinder Mormius from publiſhing a treatiſe under the following title, which is now become a ſcarce and valuable book. Arcana totius naturæ ſecretiſſima, nec hactenus unquam detecta, a collegio Roſiano in lucem produntur, opera Petri Mormii, in 24, Lugduni Batavorum, 1630.

pher's ſtone, be not at once the great ſecret of tranſmutation, and of the univerſal medicine.

THE cleareſt account of this matter that I have ever mèt with, is in the anſwer of a French adept, to Doctor Edmund Dickenſon, phyſician to king Charles II. and a profeſt admirer of the hermetic philoſophy. The doctor's letter is very plain and clear. He wrote to a friend of his, in order to be thoroughly informed as to thoſe contrarieties, which he thought he had diſcerned in the diſcourſes of ſome of the hermetic ſages. His friend gives him a very plauſible anſwer to all his objections, and to enforce the belief of what he lays down, he puts the doctor in mind of his having made projection, that is, his having tranſmuted baſe metals into gold, more than once, before the doctor, in the king's laboratory in Whitehall; as to the univerſal medicine, and its capacity of extending the life of man for many ages, he poſitively aſſerts, that it is in the hands of the illuminated brethren, and gives many reaſons why they ſhould be ſo extremely careful in concealing it. He goes ſo far as to inſinuate, that it was in his own poſſeſſion [c]. I muſt own, I am aſtoniſhed at ſuch ſort of aſſertions, and more ſo, at

[c] The title of Dr. Dickenſon's book referred to by our author, is, De quinta eſſentia Philoſophorum. It was printed at Oxford in 1686, and a ſecond time in 1705. There is a third edition

at ſome relations well atteſted, that ſeem to favour the truth of it.

THERE happened, in the year 1687, an odd accident at Venice, that made a very great ſtir then, and which I think deſerves to be ſecured from oblivion. The great freedom and eaſe with which all perſons, who make a good appearance, live in that city, is known ſufficiently to all who are acquainted with it; ſuch will not therefore be ſurpriſed that a ſtranger, who went by the name of Signior Gualdi, and who made a conſiderable figure there, was admitted into the beſt company, tho' no body knew who, or what he was. He remained at Venice ſome months, and three things were remarked in his conduct. The firſt was, that he had a ſmall collection of fine pictures, which he readily ſhewed to any body that deſired it; the next, that he was perfectly verſed in all arts and ſciences, and ſpoke on every ſubject with ſuch readineſs and ſagacity as aſtoniſhed all who heard him; and it was in the third place obſerved, that he never wrote or received any letter; never deſired any credit, or made uſe of bills of exchange, but paid for every thing in

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edition of it printed in Germany in 1721. The author was one of thoſe very great men whoſe merits are better known abroad than at home; he is mentioned by the learned Olaus Borrichius, and many other foreign writers, with much reſpect, and juſt teſtimonies of eſteem for his extenſive knowledge.

ready

ready money, and lived decently, tho' not in ſplendor. This gentleman met one day at the coffee-houſe with a Venetian nobleman, who was an extraordinary good judge of pictures: he had heard of Signor Gualdi's collection, and in a very polite manner deſired to ſee them, to which the other very readily conſented. After the Venetian had viewed Signor Gualdi's collection, and expreſſed his ſatisfaction, by telling him that he had never ſeen a finer, conſidering the number of pieces of which it conſiſted; he caſt his eye by chance over the chamber door, where hung a picture of this ſtranger. The Venetian looked upon it, and then upon him. This picture was drawn for you, Sir, ſays he to Signor Gualdi, to which the other made no anſwer, but by a low bow. You look, continued the Venetian, like a man of fifty, and yet I know this picture to be of the hand of Titian, who has been dead one hundred and thirty years, how is this poſſible? It is not eaſy, ſaid Signor Gualdi, gravely, to know all things that are poſſible; but there is certainly no crime in my being like a picture drawn by Titian. The Venetian eaſily perceived, by his manner of ſpeaking, that he had given the ſtranger offence, and therefore took his leave. He could not forbear ſpeaking of this in the evening to ſome of his friends, who reſolved to ſatisfy themſelves by looking upon the picture the next day. In order to have an opportunity of doing ſo, they went to the coffee-houſe about the time that Signor Gualdi was wont to come thither, and

not meeting with him, one of them, who had often converſed with him, went to his lodgings to enquire after him, where he heard that he ſet out an hour before for Vienna. This affair made a great noiſe, and found a place in all the news-papers of that time [d].

THIS ſtory agrees very well with what is ſaid by Dr. Dickenſon's correſpondent, who obſerves, that the adepts are obliged to conceal themſelves for the ſake of ſafety; and that having a power not only of prolonging their lives, but alſo of renovating their bodies, they take care to uſe it with the utmoſt diſcretion, and inſtead of making a diſplay of this wonderful prerogative, they manage it with the higheſt ſecrecy, which he lays down as the true cauſe of the world's being in ſo much doubt about the matter. Hence it comes to paſs, that though an adept is poſſeſſed of greater wealth than is contained in the mines of Peru, yet he always lives in ſo moderate a manner as to avoid all ſuſpicion, and ſo as never to be diſcovered, unleſs by ſome unforeſeen accident, like that which happened to a famous Engliſh artiſt, who diſguiſed himſelf under the name of Eugenius Philalethes, and whoſe true name is ſaid to be Thomas Vaughan, the cleareſt and moſt candid writer of all the hermetic philoſophers [e]. He tells us of himſelf,

[d] Memoires Hiſtoriques, 1687, tom. i. p. 365.

[e] The moſt famous of his pieces is intitled, Introitus apertus ad occluſum regis palatium. This was written originally in Engliſh,

ſelf, that going to a goldſmith, in order to ſell twelve hundred marks of fine ſilver, the man told him, at firſt ſight, that it never came out of the mines, but was the product of art, as not being of the ſtandard of any nation whatever; which ſurpriſed Philalethes ſo much, that he withdrew immediately, and left the goldſmith in poſſeſſion of his treaſure. This famous man, who certainly was an adept, if ever there was one, led a wandering kind of life, and fell often into great dangers, merely from his poſſeſſing this great ſecret. He was born, as we learn from his writings, about the year 1612, and what is the ſtrangeſt part of his hiſtory, he is believed by thoſe of his fraternity to be yet living, and a perſon of great credit at Nuremberg affirms, that he converſed with him but a few years ago. Nay, it is further aſſerted, by all the lovers of hermetic philoſophy, that this very Philalethes is the preſident of the illuminated in Europe, and that he conſtantly ſits as ſuch in all their annual meetings. It is on the one hand true, that there is ſomething wild and incredible in theſe relations, and yet it is as certain on the other, that ſeveral who atteſt them, are perſons of irreproachable character, and even with reſpect to this Philalethes, he was, according to the report of the great Boyle, and others who knew him, a man of remarkable piety, and of unſtained morals. In the Engliſh

Engliſh, has been tranſlated into almoſt all the European languages, and is unqueſtionably the beſt and cleareſt book upon the ſubject that is extant in any tongue.

plantations, he became acquainted with one Starkey, a chemiſt, before whom he made projection; but finding that Starkey was a vicious and extravagant man, he broke off his acquaintance with him, without communicating any part of his ſecrets [f].

BUT it may be ſaid, by ſuch as look upon this whole affair, as an idle and ridiculous thing, and who conſider all theſe relations: however atteſted, or ſupported, as mere dreams or viſions: I ſay, it may be alledged by theſe angry critics, that it is a direct proof of the falſhood of their pretenſions to long life; that we have diſtinct accounts of the time when their moſt celebrated patriarchs, ſuch as Roger Bacon, Raymond Lully, and Baſil Valentine died, and were buried. If, therefore, theſe men could not preſerve their own lives, or even protract them beyond the ordinary extent, what probability is there, will theſe people ſay, that any of the fraternity ſhould prolong their lives in the manner they relate? In anſwer to this, the adepts always inſinuate, that if theſe great men died, it was by their own choice; and that many of their fraternity ſtill decline that

[f] This George Starkey was originally an apothecary, had a head turned to chemiſtry, but managed his affairs ſo ill, that he was obliged to tranſport himſelf to the plantations, where he became acquainted with Philalethes, of which acquaintance he boaſts much in his writings. In 1658, he publiſhed a book of chemiſtry at London, which was tranſlated into French in 1706, and into High Dutch in 1712.

length

length of life their art would enable them to enjoy. This, I muſt confeſs, is an unſatisfactory anſwer, eſpecially to ſuch as make the objection; but then, ſay the adepts, it is the only anſwer that becomes us to give; we do not aim at the conviction of theſe ſort of people, we are not deſirous of making a noiſe in the world, we do not even regard the poſſeſſion of riches, and long-life, as bleſſings in themſelves; further than that they enable us to do good, and the ſole reaſon of our ever mentioning ſuch ſecrets being in our poſſeſſion, is in order to lead to our ſociety ſuch worthy perſons as deſerve to be aſſociated. Now, however weak, however ſophiſtical, this reaſoning may appear to the generality of mankind, yet, upon the principles of the hermetic philoſophy, it muſt be allowed to be extremely plauſible, and in all ſuch caſes we muſt admit men to argue from their own principles, and not from theſe we lay down.

THE truth of the affair is, that the matters of fact we meet with, ſprinkled, but very ſparingly, in the works of theſe hermetic writers, are ſo aſtoniſhing, and at the ſame time are told with ſuch an air of confidence, that if we entertain the leaſt doubt of their veracity, we cannot help arraigning them of the higheſt degree of impudence. They ſpeak of all mankind as infinitely below them; for in compariſon of the adepts, monarchs themſelves are poor; the moſt learned are mere ſots and block-

heads; and thoſe who are venerable from their age and grey hairs, are but children. It is impoſſible not to read ſuch books under ſtrong prejudices, and theſe are ſo much the greater from hence, that ſuch aſtoniſhing facts are not met with in the writings of the lower claſs of theſe philoſophers, but in thoſe that have the higheſt credit, and that, to ſpeak fairly, in many other reſpects, appear to have been men of ſenſe and candour, in the diſcourſes they have written on the nature of metals and other things.

A SINGLE inſtance will ſet this in as clear a light as an hundred. We have mentioned more than once, and ſhall be obliged to mention again, the aſge Artephius, whoſe writings are very famous among the hermetic philoſophers; inſomuch, that the noble Olaus Borrichius, an excellent writer, and a moſt candid critic, recommends theſe writings to the ſedulous peruſal of thoſe that would acquire the knowledge of this ſublime philoſophy, and aſſures them, that if they read them frequently, it will not be without fruit. Yet in one of theſe treatiſes, this writer himſelf tells us, without either ceremony or circumlocution, that he was one thouſand and twenty-five years old when he wrote it [g]. A man muſt ſure

[g] One may eaſily perceive that our author ſpeaks of Artephius from Mangetus, or ſome other compiler; but for the reader's ſatisfaction, I will here tranſcribe the whole paſſage from the treatiſe

ſure have an oſtrich's ſtomach that digeſts this, and yet without digeſting it; one can have no opinion of any thing this writer ſays, who, in other reſpects, is very far from being deſpicable in point of ſcience, and upon whoſe authority the learned friar Bacon, who, if I miſtake not, is the firſt European writer that quotes him, ſeems to rely, and therefore could not be ſcandalized even at this ſtupendous ſtory of his age, whatever we, who are unacquainted with hermetic ſecrets, may think of it.

IT is very poſſible that the inquiſitive reader would be glad to know ſomething of the hiſtory of

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tiſe of that hermetic philoſopher, which will ſet this point in a clear light. "Know aſſuredly, ſays he, I am not at all envious as others are, he that takes the words of the other philoſophers according to the ordinary ſignification and ſound of them, he doth already, having loſt Ariadne's thread, wander in the midſt of the labyrinth, and hath as good as appointed his money to perdition. But, I Artephius, after I had learned all the art and perfect ſcience in the books of the true ſpeaking Hermes, was ſometimes envious as all the reſt; but when I had by the ſpace of a thouſand years, or thereabouts (which are now paſſed over me ſince my nativity, by the only grace of God Almighty, and the uſe of this wonderful fifth eſſence) when I ſay, for ſo long time, I had ſeen no man that could work the maſtery of Hermes, by reaſon of the obſcurity of the philoſopher's words, moved with pity, and with the goodneſs becoming an honeſt man, I have determined in theſe laſt times of my life, to write all things truly and ſincerely, that thou mayeſt want, or deſire, nothing to the perfecting of the philoſopher's ſtone."

ſo extraordinary a perſonage; where he led, and how he beſtowed ſo long a life. But, in this, it is by no means eaſy to give him any tolerable ſatisfaction. His writings, ſo far as we are able to judge about them, ſeem to have been compoſed about the beginning of the twelfth century; but who he was, or how he acquired his knowledge, farther than that he had one Bolenus for his maſter, has not been hitherto ſo much as gueſſed at. The language in which he wrote was Latin, and that none of the coarſeſt, ſo that his treatiſes are far from being inelegant, with reſpect to the manner in which they are compoſed, as, on the other hand, they have a wonderful plainneſs and perſpicuity in their matter; but as to the method by which he prolonged his life, which after all, to one who is not in ſearch of the ſuperior myſteries of the hermetic philoſophy, is the point that he would wiſh moſt to ſee explained; it is not covered with impenetrable obſcurity, and therefore we will diſmiſs this point, with giving the beſt account of it we can, and the rather, becauſe it will be found to have a very cloſe relation to the ſubject of this very treatiſe, and cannot conſequently be conſidered as an uſeleſs, or an impertinent digreſſion [b].

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[b] It is plain, from this paragraph, that our author had conſulted only that treatiſe of Artephius, which is printed in the fourth volume of the Theatrum Chemicum, and in the firſt volume of Mangetus's great collection; for it is in that treatiſe that he mentions

HE is ſaid to have invented a magnet peculiarly adapted to the attraction of the aura, or ſpirit of human life; ſo that by the application of this he deprived young men of their lives; and provided a volatile vivifying tincture, by which he ſurvived to a vaſt age; when growing tired of life, he included this tincture in a veſſel, and withdrew into a tomb, where he only received ſo much of it by his noſtrils as kept him alive, and in this ſtate he was when, out of pure kindneſs to the young ſtudents in the hermetic ſcience, he wrote thoſe treatiſes, which are yet ſo famous, and of which John Pontanus ſays, that they are the only pieces relative to this myſterious art, by which its ſecrets may be known without the help of a maſter. This tincture ſeems to come ſo near to the method of our Hermippus, that one might be tempted to think it the ſame, or that Hermippus might poſſibly be an hermetic philoſopher, and borrow his ſecret from that of Artephius.

BUT as I hold it a rule not to be diſpenſed with in works of this nature, for a writer to offer nothing to the world in the way of argument, which has not the ſame weight with himſelf, that he wiſhes it might

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mentions his maſter Bolenus; but the book from whence I have given the paſſage in queſtion, which, in ſome meaſure, juſtifies this hermetic ſage, is entitled Liber Secretus, and is not in either of thoſe collections.

have

have with his reader; ſo I muſt ingenuouſly confeſs, that I do not lay any great ſtreſs upon this account of Artephius; that is to ſay, I conceive the magnet by which he extracted this tincture from the vital ſpirits of young men to be enigmatical, and I am the rather induced to believe this, becauſe I find many things of a like nature in his works, and have likewiſe obſerved, that other hermetrical writers interpret them in this manner as well as I; and if ſo, I ſhould not deal candidly to produce his authority, in a literal ſenſe, in favour of this notion. Yet notwithſtanding this, and though I freely own that I am not able to explain his enigma, there is ſtill this uſe to be made of it, that undoubtedly he would not have made uſe of ſuch an allegorical deſcription of his tincture, if it had not been very expreſſive, and therefore, though the art he uſed might afford him ſomewhat infinitely ſuperior to the aſſiſtance that may be derived from the breath of young men; yet much might be performed, though in a lower degree, by a medicine of that nature ſuggeſted by the literal ſenſe of his words; neither am I inclined to aſſert that Hermippus was an hermetic philoſopher; and that for two reaſons, firſt, becauſe he ſeems to have made no ſecret of his method, as all that fraternity do; and next, becauſe notwithſtanding he prolonged his life between thirty and forty years beyond the common period, which is a thing extraordinary in itſelf, conſidered in a natural light, yet it is, in effect, little or nothing, when com-

compared with the pretences of the adepts in the hermetic ſcience [1].

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[1] It ſeems to me, that after all our author has ſaid about Artephius, an inquiſite reader will ſtill be glad to know more. The character he has given of this famous ſage, is ſuch a one as might be expected from a perſon who, though he does not care to cenſure ſuch a body of men, for they are much more numerous than the world imagines, yet is far enough from confiding in them; and therefore we will produce the ſentiment of one who profeſſes himſelf an adept, which, I flatter myſelf, will at leaſt gratify the reader's curioſity, though very poſſibly it may not gain his belief. It is contained in a kind of epiſtolary preface, that ſtands before that treatiſe of his, which is printed in the Theatrum Chemicum.

"I John Pontanus have travelled through many countries, "that I might know ſome certainty of the philoſopher's ſtone; "and going through, as it were, all the world, I found many "falſe deceivers, but no true philoſophers; yet continually "ſtudying, and making many doubts, at length I found the "truth: But when I knew the matter in general, I yet erred "two hundred times before I could attain to the true matter "with the operation and practice thereof. Firſt, I began to "work with the matter by putrefaction nine months together, "and I found nothing: then I put it into Balneum Mariæ for "a certain time, and herein I likewiſe erred: afterwards I put it "in the fire of calcination for three months ſpace, and I "wrought amiſs. I tried all kinds of diſtillations, and ſub-"limations, (as the philoſophers Geber, Archelaus, and all the "reſt, either ſay, or ſeem to ſay) and I found nothing. In "ſum, I aſſayed to perfect the ſubject of the whole art of al-"chemy, by all means poſſible to be deviſed; as by dung, "baths, aſhes, and other fires of divers kinds, which are yet "all found in the philoſopher's books, but I found no good in "them.

I SHALL have occaſion, more than once, hereafter to mention ſome curious medicines, taken notice of in the works of ſome of theſe ſages, which will not diſcredit what I have advanced in regard to the tincture of Artephius. But after all, there cannot be any thing more difficult than to comprehend what

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" them. Wherefore I ſtudied three whole years in the books " of the philoſophers; eſpecially in Hermes alone, whoſe brief " words do comprehend the whole ſtone, though he ſpeak ob- " ſcurely of the ſuperior and inferior, or that which is above, " and that which is below, of heaven and earth. Therefore " our inſtrument, which bringeth the matter into being, in the " beginning, ſecond, ſecond, and third work, is not the fire of " a bath, nor of dung, nor of aſhes, nor of the other fires, which " the philoſophers have put in their books: What fire is it " then which perfects the whole work from the beginning to " the ending? Surely the philoſophers have concealed it. They " that ſhall read Geber, and all the other philoſophers, though " they ſhould live an hundred thouſand years, could not com- " prehend it, becauſe that fire is found by deep and profound " meditation only, and then it may be gathered out of books, " and not before. And therefore the error of this art is not " to find the fire which turns the whole matter into the true " ſtone of the philoſophers. And therefore ſtudy upon it, for " if I had found that firſt, I had never erred two hundred times " in my practice upon the matter: Wherefore I do not marvel, " if ſo many and great men have not attained unto the work. " They do err, they have erred, they will err, becauſe the phi- " loſophers have not put the proper agent, ſave only one, which " is named Artephius, but he ſpeaks for himſelf, or by himſelf; " and unleſs I had read Artephius, and felt him ſpeak, I had " never come to the compliment of the work."

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theſe people would be at; and to me it ſeems full as eaſy to penetrate all their myſteries, and become one's ſelf an adept, as to know with certainty what they would be willing the world ſhould think about them. In all their treatiſes, they fail not to magnify the excellence of their own ſcience, and the ſuperiority of their own lights. An adept, if we will take their words for it, is in abſolute poſſeſſion of health, wealth, and wiſdom. He is free from almoſt all the inconvenencies which the folly of our firſt parent brought upon his unhappy poſterity; and is able to paſs through the wilderneſs of this world, not only without hurt, but without being expoſed to any of thoſe evils that afflict other men. Yet turn the tables, and their own works ſhall ſhew theſe very ſages in quite another light. If poſſeſſed of an univerſal medicine, they are obliged to conceal it, becauſe, otherwiſe, they would be made known, and diſcovered by its effects; if it is really in their power to tranſmute metals, and conſequently to poſſeſs whole mountains of gold, they are, nevertheleſs, conſtrained to embrace a kind of voluntary poverty, to prevent themſelves, and their art, from being enſlaved by the avarice of other men. If to live as long as Artephius was in their power; yet they will tell you that the croſſes which they experience are, generally ſpeaking, ſuch as diſcourage them from taking the benefit of their wonderful ſecret, ſo that it ſeems more eligible to them to ſubmit to the common ſentence of mankind, and that

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too at the common time, than to eſcape it, though this be in their power. On a ſlight view of theſe apparent contradictions, moſt people are apt to conclude all the panegyrics on themſelves and their art ſtark fiction, and have conſidered their relations as mere philoſophic dreams, with which, after amuſing themſelves through their whole lives, they are deſirous alſo of amuſing the world.

WHAT they offer in anſwer to this has been already ſhewn, and I think affords ſuch an objection to this way of ſolving their high pretenſions, by ſuppoſing them enthuſiaſtic fictions, as is not eaſily to be got over. For ſuppoſing all they ſay to be true, it cannot be denied, that they muſt ſtand expoſed to all thoſe difficulties and dangers of which we find ſo many pathetic complaints, and the conſideration of this will appear to any candid enquirer, a ſufficient reaſon to doubt whether, after all, we can pronounce with any tolerable certainty, that their pretenſions are ſo chimerical as is generally imagined. We may perhaps ſhoot as wide of truth in believing nothing, as in believing all, and in this, as in moſt other things, there may be perhaps a middle way found, much leſs liable to exception than either of the extremes. Yet here again the queſtion recurs, which is this middle way? If we do not take for granted all that they ſay of themſelves, or if we do not reject indiſcriminately all that they advance, by what rule are we to diſtinguiſh what we are to

receive, and what we are to reject? What philoſopic ſieve ſhall we make uſe of to ſeparate the wheat from the bran, and from ſuch a monſtrous heap of contradictions, to pick out ſomething that may be worth the knowing or believing.

As I do not profeſs myſelf either an adept, or ſo much as a ſtudent in this ſort of philoſophy, I ſhall take the liberty, as the matter of fact nearly concerns the ſubject of which I am treating, to ſhape out another anſwer to this objection; and it is this, that perhaps we are not always ſo ſecure, as to the deaths of theſe virtuoſi, as we imagine. The continuance of their lives is a thing, that though they boaſt of in one ſenſe, yet in another they ſtudiouſly affect to conceal. Of this I ſhall give an extraordinary inſtance, which will be ſo much the more entertaining to the reader, as, for any thing I know, it has not yet been taken notice of by any writer upon this ſubject, not even by the profeſſed hiſtorian of this fraternity, notwithſtanding he has made larger collections concerning them, and their philoſophy, than any man that ever ſet pen to paper. This inſtance will be alſo found the more extraordinary, ſince I take it from one who never pretended to be an adept, and who therefore ought to be conſidered as an unprejudiced witneſs. But before I enter upon this ſtory, I muſt deſire my readers to obſerve, that I lay down barely facts as I find them, and do not pretend to intereſt myſelf

ſelf in the leaſt, as to the credit they may meet with.

AMONGST the hermetic philoſophers, who are allowed to have attained the higheſt ſecrets of ſcience, Nicholas Flamel of Paris has been always reckoned one of the moſt conſiderable, and his right to this reputation, the leaſt to be conteſted. The hiſtory of this Flamel, who flouriſhed in the XIV^th^ century, is very curious: he was a perſon of a good family, though much reduced in point of fortune; had quick parts, a lively wit, and, with the advantage of no more than an ordinary education, was ſent to Paris to get a living as he could. Flamel wrote an extraordinary good hand, had ſome notion of poetry, and painted very prettily; yet all theſe accompliſhments raiſed him no higher than a hackney clerk, in which condition he worked very hard, and had much ado to pick up a ſubſiſtence. In 1537, chance threw in his way a book of hermetic philoſophy, written by one Abraham, a Jew, or rather engraven on leaves made of the bark of trees, and illuſtrated with very curious pictures, in which the whole ſecret was laid down in the cleareſt manner poſſible, to ſuch as were acquainted with hermetic philoſophy. This treatiſe coſt Flamel no more than two florins, for the perſon who ſold him the book knew nothing of what it contained; and Flamel himſelf, though he made it his whole ſtudy for twenty years, and though he took the precaution

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of copying the pictures, and hanging them up in his houſe, and aſking the learned their opinion about them, was able to make very little of them [k].

TIRED at length with ſo vain and ſo laborious a ſtudy, he, in 1378, took a reſolution to travel into Spain, in hopes of meeting there with ſome learned Jew, who might give him the key to the grand ſecret; that this journey might not appear to be undertaken on quite ſo chimerical a motive, he made a vow to go in pilgrimage to St. James of Compoſtella, a practice frequent in thoſe times. After much ſearch, to little purpoſe, he met at laſt with a Jew phyſician at Leon, who had been lately converted to the Chriſtian religion, and who was well verſed in this kind of ſcience: this man, at the perſuaſion of Flamel, conſented to go with him to Paris; but when they were got as far as Orleans, the phyſician, who was far in years, and little accuſtomed to the fatigue of travel, fell ſick of a fever, which

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[k] The beſt part of this account of Nicholas Flamel, is taken from his article in a very curious book, which, as it deſerves to be more known than it is, encourages me, to ſet down the title thereof at large, which runs thus: Tréſor des Recherches et Antiquitez Gauloiſes, réduites en odre Alphabetique, et enrichies de Beaucoup d'origines, épitaphes, et autres choſes rares et curieuſes, comme auſſi, de beaucoup de mots de la langue Thyoiſe, ou Theuthofranque. Paris 1655, in 4to.

carried him off in a few days [1]. Flamel having rendered the laſt kind offices to his dying friend, returned very diſconſolate to Paris, where he ſtudied three years more, according to the inſtructions he had received from the phyſician, with ſuch ſucceſs, that on the 17th of January 1382, he made projection on a large quantity of mercury, which he changed into fine ſilver, and on the 25th of April following, he tranſmuted a vaſt quantity of mercury into gold. He afterwards repeated frequently the expriment, and acquired thereby immenſe wealth. He and his wife Perenella, in the midſt of all theſe riches, lived ſtill in their old ſober way, and eat and drank, as uſual, out of earthen veſſels. They maintained however a vaſt number of poor, founded fourteen hoſpitals, built three chapels, and repaired and endowed ſeven churches. In ſhort, the acts of charity they did were ſo aſtoniſhing, that Charles the VI. who was then upon the throne, reſolved to enquire how they came by their wealth, and ſent for that purpoſe M. de Cramoiſi, maſter of requeſts, and a magiſtrate of the higheſt reputation for probity and honour, to examine into their circum-

[1] As the hiſtory of Flamel was collected long after his death, it is very poſſible that there might be ſome miſtakes committed in relation to the circumſtances attending his adventures; but there is one thing which I think proves the reality of the ſtory beyond diſpute, which is, that this very book of Abraham the Jew was actually in the hands of cardinal Richelieu, as Borel was told by the count de Cabrines, who ſaw and examined it.

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ſtances; to whom Flamel gave ſo ſatisfactory an anſwer, that no further enquiry was made about them; but the honeſt old people were left in poſſeſſion of the only privilege they deſired, which was no greater than that of doing all the good that lay in their power [m].

THE circumſtances of this ſtory, the immenſe wealth of Flamel and his wife, their many foundations, their vaſt endowments, and the prodigious eſtate they left behind them, are all facts, ſo well atteſted, that no diſpute can be raiſed about them; or if there were, the laſt will of Nicholas Flamel, which, with forty authentic acts, of as many charitable foundations, that are laid up in the archives of the pariſh church of St. James, in the Butchery at Paris, are proofs capable of convincing the greateſt infidel. This Flamel wrote ſeveral treatiſes on the art of chemiſtry; but they are extremely obſcure, becauſe they are all delivered in an allegorical way, and conſequently one may hit upon various interpretations, without coming at the true one;

[m] This too is a fact out of diſpute, and as a proof that Flamel drew his riches from an acquaintance with the hermetic philoſophy, the hieroglyphic pictures upon his tomb are uſually, and I think very juſtly cited, as well as the treatiſes he wrote upon this ſubject, particularly the following work of his, La grand eclairciſſement de la fierre philoſophale, pour la tranſmutation de tous métaux, par Nicholas Flamel, in 8vo. Paris, 1628.

which, it is ſaid, he gave to a nephew of his, and that the ſecret remained long in the family, nay, it is owing to indiſcretion, if it does not ſo ſtill [n]. I muſt not, however, conceal an attempt that has been made to overturn the whole of this hiſtory, not by denying the facts, for that would have been ridiculous, ſince there are hundreds of poor that yet ſubſiſt on Flamel's, and his wife's foundations, and are conſequently ſo many living witneſſes of the veracity of that part of the relation.

BUT the thing attempted is, to give another account of Flamel's acquiring his wealth, and in order to this they tell you, that he was a notary public at the time the Jews were expelled France, that they depoſited with him in truſt a great part of their wealth, and that he kept it for his own uſe [o]. Such as

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[n] Flamel left his ſecret to the family of Du Perrier, the laſt of which was a phyſican of that name, amongſt whoſe papers it was found; I mean only part of the powder, by one Du Bois; who, having acted very imprudently in making projection before ſeveral perſons, and pretending to much greater knowlege than he really had, brought upon himſelf an unfortunate end, being hanged by order of cardinal Richelieu.

[o] This ſtory, as far as I am able to learn, was firſt uſhered into the world by Gabriel Naudé, a warm and angry writer, and one far from being exact; from him it is copied by George Hornius, in his preface to the works of Geber, and by many other writers. But as to the notoriety of the fact, with reſpect to the baniſhment

as treat what has been ſaid of the philoſophers ſtone, and of hermetic philoſophy, as a fable, have run away with this explication, as if it had been a clear and ſatisfactory account of the matter, without conſidering that it is in truth attended with greater difficulties than the tale of the tranſmutation. For what probability is there that perſons of ſo much worth and piety, as Flamel and his wife are allowed to have been, ſhould be guilty of ſuch a flagrant act of injuſtice, as to betray the truſt repoſed in them, and this purely to do acts of charity? If, indeed, they had lived in luxurious plenty, and had rioted in all the pleaſures which their immenſe wealth might have enabled them to have indulged, the ſtory would have deſerved ſome credit; but to imagine that two ſober people, leading a life of the utmoſt frugality, and expending all their revenues for pious and charitable purpoſes, ſhould contrive to get the money ſo ſpent, by baſe and fraudulent means, is utterly incredible. Beſides, if this had been the caſe, it is impoſſible to account for two circumſtances; the firſt is, that the king of France ſhould be ſatisfied with the account that Flamel thought fit to give to Cramoiſi; the other, that this ſtory ſhould never break out during the life of

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baniſhment of the Jews, as all the French hiſtorians agree in it, and in the dates relating to it, one may ſafely conclude that it is fully anſwered.

Flamel, or within an age after his death. But as I know there are people who, to avoid being ſuſpected of credulity, will ſwallow any thing oppoſite to what they think it would be a ſhame to believe, I ſhall deſtroy this ſcandalous hiſtory of Flamel's riches by an argument, that even theſe people dare not diſcredit. In ſhort, the Jews have been twice expelled France, firſt in 1180, long before Flamel was born, and again in 1406, ſeveral years after all his endowmments were made, and but ſeven years before the death of him and his wife Perrenella [p].

BUT methinks I hear ſome captious reader cry out, what did Flamel and Perrenella die? to what end then all this tedious ſtory? what is there in Flamel's life that correſponds with that of Hermippus? or what has alchemy to do with the breath of virgins, or the prolongation of human life? Peace a little; I promiſed you ſome account of Flamel that has not been hitherto regarded, that has eſcaped the notice of all who have written the hiſtory of hermetic philoſophers, from the noble Olaus Borrichius, down to abbé du Freſnoy, and this I am going to give you. But permit me to obſerve, firſt, that

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[p] If the reader has a mind to be better acquainted with the adventures of this adept, he may conſult the hiſtory of hermetic philoſophy, publiſhed lately by the abbé Lenglet du Freſnoy.

my

my account is taken from the travels of the Sieur Paul Lucas, who, by order of Lewis XIV. paſſed through Greece, Aſia Minor, Macedonia, and Africa, in ſearch of antiquities, who dedicated this book of his to that prince, and who muſt be therefore preſumed to relate what was true, or what he took to be true; for no body, who knew the character of Lewis XIV. can imagine he would ſuffer a fellow to uſher his falſhoods into the world under the ſanction of his name; much leſs, that after being guilty of ſuch a piece of inſolence, he ſhould encourage, protect, and employ, ſuch a man, as, in fact, he did to the very end of his reign; and this in conſequence of the reputation he acquired from the publication of the voyages, the authority of which I am going to uſe [q].

IT may not be amiſs to put my reader in mind, that I have ſtrictly kept my word. The ſieur Lucas was no hermetic philoſopher, no chemiſt, no deep ſtudent in the ſciences; and, if we gueſs from his writings, no man of art or addreſs; but a bold, rough, free ſpoken traveller, who had ſeen much, and was willing to tell the world all he had ſeen. If, from hence, any ſhould be led into an opinion that he was a credulous man, and might

[q] See the preface to the book from which this ſtory is taken, which is entitled; Voyage de Sieur Paul Lucas, fait par ordre du roi dans la Greece, &c. Amſterdam, 1714, in 12mo. two volumes.

be eaſily impoſed on, I have nothing to ſay to that; I do not intend to turn advocate for the ſolidity of a traveller's underſtanding, any more than for the truth of hermetic philoſophy. I only lay down things as they are, or at leaſt as they appear to be, and leave all the reſt to the reader's deciſion. All I inſiſt upon, as to the ſieur Lucas's relation, is this, that he could not be deceived as to the matter of fact; he could not dream the ſtory he has told us; he could not ſee it in a viſion; and as to the reſt I do not concern myſelf about it. He might poſſibly be cheated by the Mohammedan monks, for I can readily conceive, that monks of all religions are the ſame; and yet if as great abſurdities, and much greater difficulties attend the ſtory in that light than in any other, I preſume it may juſtify a hint, that it is not impoſſible it might be otherwiſe, than ſuch ſevere critics may incline to believe. But it is no time to come to the ſtory, and therefore I ſhall put an end to my reflections.

HE informs us, that being at Brouſſa, in Natolia, and going to take the air towards a little village called Bournous Bachy, at a ſmall diſtance from thence, in company with a perſon of diſtinction, he met with the following adventure, which I ſhall relate to you exactly in his own words [r]. We went together

[r] It is ſomewhat remarkable, that ſince the publiſhing the firſt edition of this work, we have diſcovered a very ſingular illuſtration

together to a little moſque, ſays he, where one of their moſt eminent Derviſes was interred. It is always a Derviſe that has the cuſtody of ſuch places, which are, generally ſpeaking, pleaſantly ſituated, adorned

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tration of this ſtory, from the works of an author of unqueſtionable integrity, and with whom there is no great reaſon to believe this French traveller could be at all acquainted. This author is Sir Paul Rycaut, who, in his State of the Ottoman Empire, gives the following account of the ſepulchre, and the moſque, mentioned in the text, in terms which very much corroborate ſome circumſtances of this extraordinary relation. State of the Ottoman Empire, b. 11. cap. 20.

" In the time of Orchanes the ſecond, king of the Turks, " who governed thirty-five years, and reigned eighty-three, " and died in the hegira of Mahomet ſeven hundred and ſix- " teen, there lived in Pruſa, then the regal ſeat, a famous San- " ton, called Herewi, who uſed to walk up and down, and, as " an act of charity, to buy the livers and lights of beaſts to feed " cats and dogs. He profeſſed poverty and ſevere mortifica- " tion, with tears and ſighs, which he acted with that ferven- " cy, that the angels, leaving heaven, came to be witneſs of his " holy penance. The fame of this moved ſultan Orchanes to " diſcourſe with him, and to know the ſtory of his paſt life, " which he, ſmiling, began to recount, and told him that he " formerly was a king, derived from the line of Mahomet, had " compaſſed with his arms the rivers of Nilus, Euphrates, and " Tigris, had governed provinces with his ſword and ſcepter, " had been triumphantly adorned with precious ſtones, and " glittering arms, and had made the world tremble at the very " mention of his name. But, at laſt, conſidering the vanity " of this world, he reſolved on a ſolitary life, and to renounce " all the follies, and ſmall ſatisfaction of riches and empty ho- " nours. At which ſaying, ſultan Orchanes was amazed, and ſaid,

adorned with gardens and fountains, and on that account, ſet a-part for public walks, and places of recreation. We were quickly introduced into a little cloiſter, where we found four Derviſes, who received us with all imaginable civility, and deſired us to partake of what they were eating; we were told, what we ſoon found to be very true, that they were all perſons of the greateſt worth and learning. One of them, who ſaid he was of the country of the Uſbecs, (a tribe of Tartars) appeared to me more learned than the reſt, and I believe verily he ſpoke all the languages in the world. As he did not know me to be a Frenchman, after we had converſed

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" ſaid, we ought not to deſpiſe thoſe who, under the guiſe and " appearance of mad and diſtracted perſons, wander through " the world; for their virtues are rare, and in this man, par- " ticularly, I diſcover ſo much of ſanctity, that I judge myſelf " unworthy of the name of one of his ſervants. And this is " the reaſon why fools and frantic people have ever ſince been " had in honour and reverence amongſt the Turks, as thoſe " whom revelations and enthuſiaſm have tranſported out of the " ordinary temperament of humanity.

" This Herewi was very learned and experienced in chemiſ- " try, and on thoſe who profeſſed his order, and entered into " the regular life of his religion, inſtead of aſpers, he beſtowed " gold. He wore a green veſt, and lived very abſtemiouſly, " he mended his own cloaths, and dreſſed the diet for his con- " vent. He endowed many moſques, and ſeveral hoſpitals of " charity, at Grand Cairo and Babylon. His ſepulchre is at " Pruſa, which is greatly viſited by pilgrims, and adorned by " the bounty and munificence of thoſe who reverence the me- " mory of this holy Santon."

ſome

ſome time in the Turkiſh language, he aſked me if I could ſpeak Latin, Spaniſh, or Italian. I told him, that, if he pleaſed, he might talk to me in Italian; but as he ſoon diſcovered, by my accent, that it was not my mother tongue, he aſked me frankly what country I came from. As ſoon as he knew that I was a native of France, he ſpoke to me in as good French as if he had been brought up at Paris. How long, Sir, ſaid I, did you ſtay in France? he anſwered me, that he had never been there, but that he had a great inclination to undertake the journey.

I DID all that lay in my power to ſtrengthen that reſolution, and perſuade him to it, in order to which, I told him, that there was no kingdom in the world more poliſhed; that ſtrangers, eſpecially, were extremely well received there, and that without queſtion he would meet with the greateſt ſatisfaction from this journey. No, no, returned he, I am not in ſuch a hurry to make it, I ſhould be a fool to flatter myſelf with any ſuch hopes; I am one of the ſages, and I know that is enough to hinder me from enjoying quiet there, ſo that I am not like to think any more of the matter. I took a great deal of pains to convince him that he was deceived, that ſome bad people had given him ill impreſſions of my country; that France, on the contrary, was the very nurſery of the learned; and that the king, whoſe ſubject I had the honour to be, was the greateſt patron of the ſciences. I went further ſtill, I

told him, that though I had not the honour to be of any learned profeſſion myſelf, yet his majeſty was pleaſed to defray the expences of the travels in which he ſaw me engaged, and this with no other view than to procure notices of thoſe things, the knowledge of which remained yet neceſſary for perfecting the ſciences; ſuch as of herbs that might be uſeful in phyſic, antient monuments that might contribute to the illuſtration of remarkable events, and conſequently ſerve to render hiſtory more complete; the view of the countries themſelves, in order to the rectifying geographical charts; in fine, I run through all the proofs I could think of, in order to convince him of the inclination that prevailed in France, in favour of the ſciences, and of learning, all which he attributed to the climate, and ſeemed to approve what I ſaid out of pure civility. At laſt, however, he ſeemed to be raviſhed with the fine things I told him, and went ſo far as to aſſure, that ſome time or other he would certainly go thither. Our converſation being ended, the Derviſes carried us to their houſe, which was at the bottom of the mountain, very near Bournous Bachy, where having drank coffee, I took my leave of them, but with a promiſe, however, that I would ſhortly come and ſee them again.

ON the 10th the Derviſe, whom I took for an Uſbec, came to pay me a viſit. I received him in the beſt manner poſſible, and as he appeared to me a very

a very learned, as well as curious man, I ſhewed him all the manuſcripts I had bought, and he aſſured me they were very valuable, and written by great authors: I muſt ſay, in favour of this Derviſe, that he was a perſon every way extraordinary, even to his outward appearance. He ſhewed me abundance of curious things in phyſic, and promiſed me more; but at the ſame time he could not help ſaying, that it was neceſſary that I ſhould make ſome extraordinary preparations on my ſide, in order to put myſelf into a condition of profiting by the lights he was able to give me. To judge according to his appearance, he ſhould have been a man about thirty, but, by his diſcourſe, he ſeemed to have lived at leaſt a century, and of this I was the more perſuaded, from the accounts he gave me of ſome long voyages he had made.

He told me, that he was one of ſeven friends, who all wandered up and down the world with the ſame view of perfecting themſelves in their ſtudies, and that at parting, they always appointed another meeting at the end of twenty years, in a certain city which was mentioned, and that the firſt who came waited for the reſt. I perceived, without his telling me, that Brouſſa was the city appointed for their preſent meeting. There were four of them there already, and appeared to converſe with each other, with a freedom that ſpoke rather an old acquaintance, than an accidental meeting. In a long

converſation, with a man of great parts, it is natural to run over abundance of curious topics. Religion and natural philoſophy took up our thoughts by turns, and, at laſt, we fell upon chemiſtry, alchemy, and the cabala; I told him that all theſe, and eſpecially the notion of the philoſopher's ſtone, were now regarded by moſt men of ſenſe, as mere fictions and chimeras. That, returned he, ought not to ſurprize you, for, in the firſt place, we ought to ſuffer nothing to aſtoniſh us in this life; the true ſage hears all things without being ſcandalized at them; but though he may have ſo much complaiſance, as not to ſhock an ignorant perſon when he talks of theſe things, yet is he obliged, do you think, to ſink his underſtanding to a level with vulgar minds, becauſe they are not able to raiſe their thoughts to an equality with his? when I ſpeak of a ſage, ſaid he, I mean that kind of man to whom alone the title of philoſophy properly belongs. He has no ſort of tie to the world, he ſees all things die and revive without concern; he has more riches in his power than the greateſt of kings, but he tramples them under his feet, and this generous contempt ſets him even in the midſt of indigence, above the power of events.

HERE I ſtopped him. With all theſe fine maxims, ſaid I, the ſage dies as well as other people. What imports it therefore to me, to have been either a fool, or a philoſopher, if wiſdom hath no prerogative

tive over folly, and one is no more a ſhield againſt death than the other? alas! ſaid he, I perceive you are abſolutely unacquainted with ſublime ſcience, and have never known true philoſophy. Learn from me, my friend, ſuch a one as I have deſcribed dies indeed, for death is a debt which nature exacts, and from which therefore no man can be exempt; yet he dies not before the utmoſt time fixed by his great Creator. But then you muſt obſerve, that this period approaches near a thouſand years, and to the extent of that time a ſage may live. He arrives at this through the knowlege he has of the true medicine. By this means, he is able to ward off whatever may impeach, or hinder the animal functions, or deſtroy the temperature of his nature. By that, he is enabled to acquire the knowlege of whatever God has left within the cognizance of man. The firſt man knew them by his reaſon; but it was this ſame reaſon that blotted them again from his mind; for having attained to this kind of natural knowlege, he began to mingle therewith his own notions and ideas. By this confuſion, which was the effects of a fooliſh curioſity, he rendered imperfect even the work of his Creator, and this error it is that the ſage labours to redreſs. The reſt of animals act only by their inſtinct, by which they preſerve themſelves, as at their firſt inſtitution, and live as long now as when the world firſt began. Man is yet a great deal more perfect; bur, has he ſtill preſerved that prerogative we mentioned, or has he not loſt long

ago

ago the glorious privilege of living a thouſand years, which with ſo much care he ſhould have ſtudied to preſerve? This then it is that the true ſages have retrieved, and that you may no more be led into miſtakes, let me aſſure you, that this is what they call the philoſopher's ſtone, which is not a chimerical ſcience, as ſome half read people fancy, but a thing ſolid and ſound. On the other hand, it is certainly known but to a few, and indeed it is impoſſible it ſhould be made known to moſt part of mankind, whom avarice or debauchery deſtroy, or whom an impetuous deſire of life kills.

SURPRISED at all I heard: And would you then perſuade me, ſaid I, that all who have poſſeſſed the philoſopher's ſtone, have likewiſe lived a thouſand years? Without doubt, returned he gravely, for whenever God has been pleaſed to favour any mortal with that bleſſing, it depends entirely on himſelf to reach the age of a thouſand years, as in his ſtate of innocence the firſt man might have done. I told him, that there had been, in our country, ſome of thoſe happy mortals that were ſaid to have poſſeſſed this life-giving ſtone, and yet had never extended their days to ſuch a length, as to go with that decrepidneſs that muſt attend ſuch an exceſſive age, into another ſtate. But, continued he, don't you know that the appellation of a philoſopher is much proſtituted; let me tell you once again, there is none properly ſuch, but thoſe who live to the age I have mentioned.

tioned. At laſt, I took the liberty to mention the illuſtrious Flamel, who, I ſaid, had poſſeſſed the philoſopher's ſtone, but was dead to all intents and purpoſes, for all that. At the mention of his name, he ſmiled at my ſimplicity. As I had by this time begun to yield ſome degree of credit to his diſcourſe, I was ſurpriſed he ſhould make a doubt of what I advanced upon this head; the Derviſe obſerved this, and could not help ſaying, with an air of mirth, and do you really think the thing ſo? do you actually believe Flamel is dead? No, no, my friend, continued he, don't deceive yourſelf, Flamel is living ſtill, neither he nor his wife are yet at all acquainted with the dead. It is not above three years ago ſince I left both the one and the other in the Indies, and he is, ſaid he, one of my beſt friends; upon which, he was going to tell me, how their acquaintance grew, but ſtopping himſelf ſhort of a ſudden, that, ſaid he, is little to the purpoſe, I will rather give you his true hiſtory, with reſpect to which, in your country, I dare ſay, you are not very well acquainted.

WE ſages, continued he, tho' rare in the world, yet are of all ſects and profeſſions, neither is there any great inequality amongſt us on that account. A little before the time of Flamel, there was a Jew of our fraternity; but as, through his whole life, he had a moſt ardent affection for his family, he could not help deſiring to ſee them after

he once came to the knowlege of their being ſettled in France. We foreſaw the danger of the thing, and did all that in us lay to divert him from this journey, in which we often ſucceeded. At laſt, however, the paſſion of ſeeing his family grew ſo ſtrong upon him, that go he would; but at the time of his departure, he made us a ſolemn promiſe to return to us as ſoon as it was poſſible. In a word, he arrived at Paris, which was, as it is now, the capital of the kingdom, and found there his father's deſcendants in the higheſt eſteem among the Jews. Amongſt others, there was a Rabbi, who had a genius for the true philoſophy, and who had been long in ſearch of the great ſecret. Our friend did not heſitate at making himſelf known to his relation, on the contrary, he entered into a ſtrict friendſhip with him, and gave him abundance of lights. But as the firſt matter is a long time preparing, he contented himſelf with putting into writing the whole ſeries of the proceſs, and to convince his nephew that he had not amuſed him with falſhoods, he made projection in his preſence on thirty ocques (an ocque is three pounds) of baſe metal, and turned it into pure gold. The Rabbi, full of admiration, did all he could to perſuade our brother to remain with him, but in vain; becauſe he, on the other hand, was reſolved not to break his word with us. The Jew, when he found this, changed his affection into mortal hatred, and his avarice ſtifling all principles of nature and religion, he reſolved to extinguiſh

guiſh one of the lights of the univerſe. Diſſembling, however, his black deſign, he beſought the ſage, in the tendereſt manner, to remain with him only for a few days. During this ſpace, he plotted and executed his execrable purpoſe, of murdering our brother, and made himſelf maſter of his medicine. Such horrible actions never remain long unpuniſhed. Some other black things he had done came to light, for which the Jew was thrown into priſon, convicted, and burnt alive.

THE Jews fell ſoon after under a proſecution at Paris, as without doubt you have heard. Flamel, more reaſonable than the reſt of his countrymen, entered into a ſtrict friendſhip with ſome of them; and as his great honeſty and unblemiſhed probity were well known, a Jew merchant entruſted him with all his books and papers, among which were thoſe of the Jew which had been burnt, and the book that our brother had left with him. The merchant, taken up no doubt with his own affairs, and with the care of his trade, had never conſidered this valuable piece with any attention; but Flamel, whoſe curioſity led him to examine it more cloſely, perceiving ſeveral pictures of furnaces and alembics, and other veſſels, he began immediately to apprehend, that in this book was contained the grand ſecret. He got the firſt leaf of the book, which was in Hebrew, tranſlated, and with the little he met with therein, was confirmed in his opinion; but

knowing that the affair required prudence and circumſpection, he took, in order to avoid all diſcovery, the following ſteps. He went into Spain, and as Jews were every where ſettled throughout that country, in every place that he came to, he applied himſelf to the moſt learned, engaging each of them to tranſlate a page of his book; having thus obtained an entire verſion, he ſet out again for Paris. He brought back with him a faithful friend of his to labour with him in the work, and with whom he intended to ſhare the ſecret; but a raging fever carried him off, and deprived Flamel of his aſſociate[a]. When therefore he came home, he and his wife entered together upon the work, and arriving in proceſs of time at the ſecret, acquired immenſe riches, which they employed in building public edifices, and doing good to a multitude of people.

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[a] The reader will eaſily perceive, that there are ſome variations in this hiſtory from that which we have before given of Flamel; but this only ſhews that we have not done any thing to countenance this tale, or to give it that air of probability which in truth it wants, and after all, the difference between theſe accounts is very far from being ſo great as to deſtroy the credit of either of them. For it is very probable that Lucas's memory might betray him, and that he might refreſh it on his return into France, from the common ſtory of Flamel, with which his agrees. The principal reaſon of my citing it, was his concluſion, which I particularly recommend to the reader's conſideration; ſince if Flamel's ſtory be known in thoſe parts of the world with ſuch a degree of exactneſs, it is little leſs wonderful than the reſt of the ſtory in all its circumſtances.

FAME is frequently a very dangerous evil; but a true ſage knows how to extricate himſelf from all kinds of peril. Flamel ſaw plainly, that the prevailing notion of his having the philoſopher's ſtone might be fatal, both to his liberty and life; he therefore bent all his thoughts to the contriving ſome method for extricating himſelf out of this danger, and having at laſt ſtruck out one, he took care to execute it immediately, and found means to ſecure their flight, by ſpreading a report of his wife's death, and his own. By his advice, ſhe feigned herſelf ſick of a diſtemper, which had its uſual courſe; ſo that by the time ſhe was ſaid to die, ſhe had reached the frontiers of Swiſſerland, where he had directed her to wait for him. They buried in her ſtead a wooden image, dreſſed up, and that nothing might be wanting to the ceremonial, it was interred in one of the churches that they had founded. Some time after, he had recourſe to the like ſtratagem for his own ſecurity, and having buried another wooden image, he, by that time the funeral was over, joined his wife. You will eaſily perceive, that there was no great difficulty in all this, ſince in every country, if a man has money, phyſicians and prieſts are always at his ſervice, ready to ſay, or do, whatever he directs them. To give the thing ſtill the better grace, and to prevent the leaſt ſuſpicion of the cheat, Flamel made his laſt will and teſtament in form, wherein he particularly deſired that his corps might be in-

terred near that of his dear wife, and that a pyramid ſhould be erected to their memories. Since that time, both of them have led a philoſophic life, ſometimes in one country, ſometimes in another. This, depend upon it, is the true hiſtory of Flamel and his wife, and not that which you have heard at Paris, where there are very few who have ever had the leaſt glimpſe of true wiſdom.

THIS ſtory appeared to me what I think it muſt appear to every one, equally ſingular and ſtrange, and the more ſo, as it was told me by a Mohammedan, who, I have all the reaſon in the world to believe, never ſat one foot in France. As to the reſt, I report this matter purely as an hiſtorian, and I have even paſſed by abundance of circumſtances more remarkable than any I have related; the truth of which, however, he affirmed. I ſhall content myſelf therefore with ſaying, that we are apt to entertain too mean notions of the learning of the Mohammedans, for certainly this man was a perſon in all reſpects of extenſive knowledge, and a ſuperior genius [t].

THE ſurpriſe expreſſed by our author at the knowlege of theſe people in the hermetic ſcience, appears to be ill founded; for there is no doubt that it is as well, and as generally underſtood through-

[t] Voyage du Lucas, tom. i. p. 79—90.

out

out the East as it is here. Indeed, why ſhould it not, ſince it is on all hand allowed, that the ſages of Europe received it from the Arabs, who are ſuppoſed to have had that, as they are ſaid to have obtained all their other learning from the Greeks. It is commonly believed that Geber, who, in the title of his works, is called an Arabian king, was the firſt of their writers, and he is ſaid to have lived about the beginning of the eighth century. But I have met with another account of this, which is, that Geber was a native of the province of Choraſan, and that inſtead of receiving his knowlege in this ſcience from the Greeks, he had it from the antient Perſees, whoſe prieſts and learned men derived it from the writings of their law-giver Zerdûſht, who was the Zoroaſter of the Greeks, and was the father and founder of the Magi, thoſe antient ſages, who are allowed, by all the writers of antiquity, to have been thoroughly verſed in all the occult ſciences. I mention this, becauſe it ſeems to give an eaſier and better account, than any we have yet received of the means by which the hermetic ſcience became diffuſed all over the Eaſt, where, without doubt, there have been, and are many profeſſors of it, even in the remoteſt parts of the Indies, as well as amongſt the Tartars, (no unlettered nation) ſubjects to the Grand Lama, who, by the way, pretends to be mortal [u].

In

[u] This notion of our author ſhews plainly, that he had made the hiſtory of philoſophy very much his ſtudy, ſince notwithſtanding

In China again the hermetic ſcience has flouriſhed many ages; and, if we will believe the Jeſuit Martini, was known and practiſed two thouſand years before the Chriſtian Æra. However, allowing this to be a miſtake, and that the Jeſuits have either been impoſed upon themſelves, or willing to impoſe upon others, in reporting ſuch a ſtory as this, yet there are two things abſolutely certain; the firſt, that they are great pretenders to this ſcience in all parts of China; the ſecond, that they had theſe no-

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ſtanding the novelty of his opinion in this reſpect, it has very much the appearance of truth. The very learned Herbelot, to whom we are ſo much indebted for his oriental library, tells us, that Geber, who is ſtiled Giabar by all the Eaſtern nations, was thought to be a native of Haran, from whence himſelf, or his ſon, was ſurnamed al Harrani; that his father's name was Senan, and that he was ſuppoſed to receive his knowlege from the Zabians, who were a ſect ſo early as in the time of Abraham. But if we reflect upon the time in which he flouriſhed, and the authorities there are to prove him a native of Choraſan, we ſhall ſee good reaſon to prefer our author's ſentiment, or rather, we ſhall diſcern its conſiſtency with the former opinion; for, in the Eaſt, many conceived Zerdûſht and Abraham to be the ſame perſon; but this is certainly an error, ariſing from hence, that Zerdûſht, in his own books, profeſſes to teach the religion of Abraham; ſo that, upon the whole, Giabar, having his philoſophy from the diſciples of Zerdûſht, may probably make honourable mention of Abraham, in ſome of thoſe many treatiſes of his that are common in the Eaſt, tho' not known to us, and from thence the opinion might ariſe of his being the countryman of Abraham, and of the ſect of the Zabians, whom almoſt all the Eaſtern writers confound with the Magi.

tions

tions long before they had any correſpondence with the Europeans. Now, I think it is very hard to conceive, that they ſhould derive this ſort of knowlege from the Arabians, or from the Greeks, but that they might eaſily have it from the diſciples of Zerdûſht, upon the diſperſion of the Perſees, is not at all incredible, or improbable; for it is very well known, that a great part of theſe unfortunate people retired into India, at a time when, if we may credit the Chineſe hiſtorians, they were in poſſeſſion of a great part of that country, of which ſome monuments ſtill remain. Neither is it at all unlikely, that ſome of theſe people might fly as far as China itſelf; and either way, the literati of China, might receive theſe notions from them [x]. This is a matter which I think has not been hitherto conſidered, or

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[x] It is a little ſurpriſing, at firſt ſight, to find men of great learning make uſe of the ſame argument to prove ſentiments directly oppoſite to each other. A very learned writer in France infers, from the prevalence of chemiſtry in China, that the inhabitants of that empire muſt have received moſt of their learning latter than is generally imagined, becauſe we know of no books of chemiſtry in Europe earlier than the third century. Our author, on the contrary, thinks the prevalence of chemiſtry among the Chineſe, is a proof of the antiquity of their knowlege, and from thence attempts to account for it. As to the matter of fact, they agree, and indeed there is nothing more indiſputable, than that the hermetic philoſophy prevails more in China, and in the Indies, than even in Germany itſelf, where a man is hardly thought learned who has not a tincture of this ſcience.

explained;

explained; and therefore I have taken the liberty to commit theſe remarks to writing, in hopes of giving thoſe who are better acquainted with this ſubject than I pretend to be, an opportunity of ſetting the grounds of them in a clearer light, either by refuting what I have advanced, and ſhewing how this kind of learning came otherwiſe into China, or by purſuing this enquiry, and ſupporting it by better authorities than I have met with, though ſome I could mention, if I did not apprehend it would lead me too far out of my way.

BUT, however, I ſhall very readily allow, that whatever knowlege the Turks at preſent have of the hermetic ſcience, they muſt have had it, as they had all the reſt of their learning, from the Arabs; and indeed it is very certain that, as the former tranſlated into their own language the beſt authors they could meet with in the libraries of all the countries which they had conquered, ſo the Turks, ſince they began to affect learning, more eſpecially ſince the reign of Mahomet II. have tranſlated the beſt books out of the Arabic, upon this, as well as all other ſciences into Turkiſh, and amongſt them not a few relating to this ſcience. Yet it ought to be known, that though the hermetic philoſophy was in great credit among the Arabians, as well as very much improved by them; this did not hinder ſome of the moſt learned men among them, from treating all notions

of

of that kind both with reſentment and contempt. It was the advice of Abou Jouſeph upon his death-bed to his children, "apply yourſelves to every kind of "learning to which you have an inclination, for "your time cannot be better employed, ſince every "ſort of ſcience is, in ſome part of life, or other, "of uſe, except theſe three; Aſtrology, Alchemy, "and Controverſy. Aſtrology ſerves only to increaſe "the miſeries of life, by adding innumerable falſe "fears to that multitude of apprehenſions which are "but too well grounded in the ſenſe, that reaſon "affords of the viciſſitudes of fortune. Alchemy "leads to beggary by promiſing riches; we flatter "ourſelves that we are going to a palace, and, in "reality, we are in the high way to an hoſpital. In-"duſtry is the philoſopher's ſtone, provided it be "accompanied with the fear of God. Controverſy "is the warfare of idle men, we doubt and diſpute "till we believe nothing, and by a fooliſh eagerneſs "to ſearch out the ſublimeſt truths of religion, we "loſe religion itſelf, and travel all our lives with-"out ever coming to our journey's end. Beware "then of theſe falſe ſciences, my children, and "ſtudy what elſe you will." It is a cuſtom of the grand ſigniors never to build a moſque, or erect a tomb, without adding a college in the ſame place, in which a certain number of Derviſes, or Monks, are maintained, and theſe frequently ſtudy the moſt curious parts of learning, and the occult ſciences more

eſpeci-

eſpecially [y], ſo that our author had no ground for his ſurprize, that theſe ſciences ſhould be underſtood amongſt the Mahomedans, but he might very well be amazed at their having any knowlege of the progreſs of thoſe ſciences in Europe, or of the names of their profeſſors, ſince this was of all others the thing, he had the leaſt reaſon to expect; for in no ſort of learning are the Turks ſo ignorant, as in that which

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[y] In confirmation of what our author has advanced, I will cite a paſſage from Sir Paul Rycaut's State of the Turkiſh Empire. "The Eſchraki, ſays he, which ſignifies illuminated, is a "ſect purely platonical, contemplative of the divine idea, and "the number in God; for tho' they hold the unity, yet they "deny not the trinity as a number proceeding from the unity; "which conception of theirs, they uſually illuſtrate by three "folds in a handkerchief, which may have the denomination "of three, but being extended, is but one piece of linen. "Theſe men are no great admirers of the compoſition of the "Alchoran. What they meet therein agreeable to their prin-"ciples, they embrace and produce as occaſion ſerves in con-"firmation of their doctrine; other parts, which with much "difficulty are reconciled to thoſe principles, they reject, and "ſtile abrogated, and becauſe they apprehend that the true "beatitude and bliſs of paradiſe conſiſts in the contemplation "of the divine majeſty, they contemn all the voluptuous fan-"cies and groſs conceptions of heaven, which Mahomet hath "framed, to allure and draw the minds of rude and groſs men. "Of this ſect are all the Scheghs, or able preachers, that be-"long to the royal moſques, or churches, who are men conſtant "in their devotions, abſtemious in their diet, of a chearful "countenance, and taking behaviour, great lovers of harmony "and muſic, of an indifferent ſtrain in poetry, whereby they compoſe

which concerns the hiſtory of the weſtern nations; the reaſon of which is, that their knowledge, like that of the Arabians, is entirely the fruit of their conqueſts, and conſequently the limits are the ſame. But with reſpect to ſpeculative ſcience, the principles of which they have in their own language; their eccleſiaſtics, and more eſpecially their Derviſes, carry it to a great height, and there are amongſt them as great metaphyſicians, as any of the diſciples of Malbranche, Leibnitz, or Wolf, whatever vulgar notions may teach to the contrary.

" compoſe certain ſongs in metre, for entertainment of their " auditory. They are likewiſe generous, and compaſſionate of " human frailty, and are not covetous, ſtoical, or conceited of " themſelves, by which means their behaviour is rendered ex- " tremely agreeable, through all Conſtantinople. They are " greatly delighted with an ingenious aſpect in youth, and " from thence gather matter of contemplation on the comeli- " neſs of the increated beauty: they are addicted to entertain " a charitable affection for their neighbour, becauſe, as they " ſay, he is a creature of God, from whom our love is con- " verted to the Creator. Their diſciples, they procure, as " much as poſſible, to be men of comely and pleaſing coun- " tenances, and majeſtic preſence, whom they inſtruct in all " the rules of abſtinence, gravity, and other virtues, moſt ap- " propriated to their ſect. And theſe, of all ſorts of Turks, " ſeem worthy of the beſt character, whom I compaſſionate, " for not being born in the pale of a Chriſtian church, nor du- " ly inſtructed in the myſteries of Chriſtianity, to which they " ſeem, by their morality and virtues, already to have many " previous diſpoſitions."

WE have now done with the hiſtory of Flamel, and if the reader has a mind to know how I bring it to have any connection with my ſubject, I ſhall inform him in a very words. According to my ſentiments, which are in part founded upon the writings of Flamel himſelf, the firſt matter of the univerſal medicine, the philoſopher's ſtone, or the grand ſecret of the hermetic philoſophers, is taken from the air; and from ſome of their writings I have gathered, that they were not altogether unacquainted with the ſecret of Hermippus; ſo that if this inſcription had fallen into their hands, I make no queſtion but they would have pronounced him an adept, and have ſupported this deciſion of their's, by giving us an account, in their manner, of his method of performing it [z]. This account, ſo far as I have been able to collect it, the reader ſhall receive in the cleareſt terms, for I pretend not to adopt their manner of writing, or to hide, in ambiguous allegories, ſo uſeful a truth.

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[z] This diſcovery will be pretty evident to any reader who conſults the fourth, ninth, and twelfth pages, of a treatiſe at the end of Mangetus's Bibliotheca Chemica, which piece is entitled, MUTUS LIBER, in quo tamen tota philoſophia hermetica, figuris hieroglyphicis depingitur ter optima maximo deo miſericordis conſecratus, ſoliſque filiis artis dedicatus, authore cujus nomen eſt Altus.

IN

In ſome books, written by theſe ſort of philoſophers, I have met with various experiments for applying the ſalubrious particles of the human breath to medicinal purpoſes; and amongſt theſe, the following ſeems to be that which beſt deſerves notice, as it ſhews a wonderful ingenuity, and is, I believe, the ſingle attempt that was ever made to extract the tinctures of living animals, in order to make them enter like other tinctures, into all the uſes of phyſic. "Let there be, ſays my author, a ſmall cloſe "room prepared, and let there be ſet up in it five "little beds, each for a ſingle perſon. In theſe "beds, let there lie five virgins under the age of "thirteen, and of wholeſome conſtitutions. Then "in the ſpring of the year, about the beginning "of the month of May, let there be a hole pierced "through the wall of the chamber, through which, "let there be inſerted the neck of a matraſs, the "body of the glaſs being expoſed to the cold air "without. It is eaſy to apprehend, that when the "room is filled with the breath and matter per-"ſpired by theſe virgins, the vapours will conti-"nually paſs through the neck of the matraſs into "the body of the veſſel, where through the cold-"neſs of the circumambient air, they will be con-"denſed into a clear water, which is a tincture of "admirable efficacy, and may be juſtly ſtiled an "Elixir vitæ, ſince a few drops of it, given in the "beginning of any acute diſtemper, reſolves and "diſperſes the morbific matter, ſo as to enable

"the

" the animal force to throw it off by indiſpenſible " perſpiration [a]."

THERE is, in this critical age, ſo ſtrong a ſpirit of cenſure abroad, that I make no queſtion, that this preſcription will be treated by many with a degree of ridicule, as a thing abſolutely impracticable in itſelf, and of no conſiderable efficacy, if it was practicable; but I beg leave to obſerve, that how ſucceſsful ſoever our modern phyſicians may be, in the cure of ſome acute diſtempers, which at the bottom, perhaps, may be no better than removing ſymptoms; yet they are not over famous in diſcovering and carrying off the cauſes of diſtempers, more eſpecially ſuch as have been of a long continuance, and may be ſuppoſed to have produced conſiderable alterations in the human body. Now as theſe are generally occaſioned by the ſlow, but conſtant operation of external cauſes, ſo the moſt rational way of delivering ſuch as labour under them, is by preſcribing the conſtant uſe of ſome potent remedy [b], and why this remedy

[a] Secreti di Diverſi excellentiſſimi Huomini, in 8vo. in Milano, 1558. See alſo Lana: de mot. tranſpirat. lib. ii. cap. iii. artic. ii. p. 73, 74.

[b] This charge of combating ſymptoms, rather than the diſeaſe has been long ago brought againſt phyſicians: but we ought to conſider, whether in fact this ought not to be rather eſteemed a misfortune than a crime; ſince, generally ſpeaking, it is in reality owing to the impatience of thoſe who are troubled with diſeaſes.

Now

remedy may not be taken from the human body itſelf I cannot ſee. The ſpirit of human blood, tho' diſguiſed under other names, is ſtill given with great ſucceſs, by ſome eminent phyſicians, though it is far from being in the credit now, in which it was formerly; and I believe for no other reaſon, but becauſe it was often adulterated. That great Engliſh philoſopher, Mr. Boyle, had this medicine in much eſteem, and with very good reaſon; ſince he gives us ſeveral inſtances of very great cures performed by it, when adminiſtred by himſelf, or by his directions; out of many I will produce two [c]. "I am "the

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Now, in reſpect to them, theſe ſymptoms are the moſt grievous parts of the diſeaſe, and therefore to convince them of his abilities, a phyſician muſt begin his cure by removing theſe, and when this is done, ten to one but his patient thinks himſelf cured, and looks upon every ſucceeding viſit as a needleſs enhancing the expence. In ſhort, of all the learned profeſſions, that of phyſic is attended with the greateſt inconveniences, for againſt death there are no remedies; and where remedies have done a cure, it is very often aſcribed to nature, chance, conſtitution; in ſhort, to any thing but the phyſician.

[c] Hiſt. ſang. human. tit. xvi. The conduct of our author is worth obſerving, he quotes the authority of Boyle in this caſe, rather than that of Paracelſus, in whoſe works he might have found many things more to his purpoſe; but in this he is very judicious, the credit of Boyle is better, and yet in many caſes he only repeats what Paracelſus ſays, but without hiding or concealing it, for that illuſtrious perſon had not only a paſſion for, but a confidence in truth, and was never aſhamed of aſſerting a

" the more inclined, ſays he, to give credit to theſe " praiſes of ſpirit of blood, becauſe, as I remember, " this was the medicine that I made uſe of in the " following caſe. A young lady, in whoſe family the " conſumption was an hereditary diſeaſe, was mo- " leſted with a violent and ſtubborn cough, that was " judged conſumptive, and looked upon by thoſe " that gave her phyſic, as not to be cured by any " other way, than a ſeaſonable remove from London, " into the French air; but ſhe was already ſo far gone, " and weakened, and there remained ſo much of the " winter, that it was judged ſhe would die before the " ſeaſon would make it any way fit for her to under- " take ſo long and troubleſome a journey; but if " ſhe could be kept alive till the end of the ſpring, " there would be ſome hopes ſhe might in France re- " cover. On this occaſion, being ſollicited by " ſome friends of hers and mine, to try what I could " do to preſerve her; I ſent her ſome ſpirit of hu- " man blood, very carefully prepared and rectified, " to which I gave ſome name, that I do not well re- " member, upon the uſe of which ſhe manifeſtly " mended, notwithſtanding the unfriendlineſs of " the ſeaſon, inſomuch, that about the end of Feb- " ruary, ſhe had gained relief and ſtrength enough to

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fact that he knew, or owning from what author he took any thing that he had read. In this the dignity of his character ſupported him, and his practice in this reſpect may be commended without bounds, but muſt be imitated with diſcretion.

" venture

" venture to croſs the ſeas, and make a journey to
" Montpellier, whence in autumn ſhe brought home
" good looks and recovery.

"IF I much miſremember not, the ſame ſpirit of
" blood made very pure and ſubtile, by the help of
" a lamp furnace, was the medicine that I put into
" the hands of an ingenious and ſucceſsful phyſician,
" who complained to me, that he had a patient that
" had quite puzzled him, as well as baffled the en-
" deavours of other eminent doctors, whom the dif-
" ficulty of the caſe had invited at ſeveral times to
" try their ſkill upon him. This man was frequent-
" ly obnoxious to ſuch violent and tormenting fits of
" the head ach, that he could not endure the light,
" and was offended with almoſt every noiſe, or motion
" that reached his ears, inſomuch, that he was forced
" to give over his profeſſion, which was that of a
" taylor: but upon the conſtant uſe of the before-
" mentioned ſpirit of blood (for the other medicines
" he took were much inferior to it, and had not be-
" fore been available) he received ſuch relief, as
" made him with great joy and thankfulneſs return
" to the exerciſe of his trade, and the phyſician to
" whom I gave the remedy for him, told me one
" circumſtance too conſiderable to be here omitted,
" namely, that the patient having, by our famous
" Harvey's advice, been uſed to bleed once in two or
" three months, the phyſician counſelled him, not-
" withſtanding his recovery, not to break off his an-

" cient cuſtom; and the patient thereupon ſent for " the ſame chirurgeon that had been formerly wont " to let him blood, and to complain of the great " badneſs of his blood, but when this chirurgeon, " who knew not what had been done to the patient, " came to open a vein again, and perceived what " kind of blood it afforded, he was ſo ſurpriſed " that he ſtopped the operation, and aſked the man " with wonder how he came by ſuch florid blood, " adding, that it was a pity to deprive him of ſo " well conditioned a liquor." After giving theſe hiſtories from a perſon of whoſe veracity, none that know his character will doubt; I ſhall only add this remark, if the ſpirit of human blood do ſo much, why may not the ſpirit of human breath, or rather the tincture of it, do as much?

WE know ſo very little of the real efficacy and power of medicines, that as we ſometimes give them to no purpoſe, ſo in other caſes, they anſwer purpoſes for which they were never given. Petronius [d], a perſon

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[d] De morbo Gallico, lib. v. cap. i. It is not very difficult to account for this operation, and abundance of inſtances might be given of the like. Mr. Boyle tells us, ſomewhere, that he was informed by the great Dr. Harvey, of his being ſent for to a gentleman who had a confirmed cataract in one eye, on account of ſome diſtemper that he was troubled with, for which he preſcribed ſucceſsfully, and thereby the cataract alſo was cured, or rather diſſipated, not only beyond, but quite beſide his expectation.

perſon of great honour and credit, as well as an excellent chirurgeon, informs us of a certain perſon of ſome rank, who, notwithſtanding he had a cataract in one of his eyes, ſaw enough of the ladies with the other, to bring him into a condition, which nothing but mercury could cure. The method in which it was ſupplied was by unction, and the iſſue of the buſineſs was truly wonderful; ſince he not only recovered from the diſtemper for which he fell under the ſurgeon's hands, but of the cataract, into the bargain. It is very apparent, therefore, that prodigious things may be done by altering the juices of the body; and it is very poſſible, that ſhorter methods may be found out for changing the juices, than hitherto have been mentioned, in caſe phyſic was proſecuted in the way of experiment and obſervation, as if men really meant to improve and perfect a ſcience, not to render the practice of a profeſſion more facile and commodious.

But it may be objected, that blood is a thing viſible, tangible, and may be treated in whatever man-

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tion. The famous Pomponius Atticus being troubled with a diſeaſe, which the phyſician looked upon as incurable, reſolved to deſtroy himſelf by faſting, by which he became perfectly well. This, however, did not hinder him from perſiſting in his deſign, which in that age and country was looked upon as a mark of conſtancy, with what reaſon I leave the candid and judicious reader to determine.

ner we think proper; whereas it is otherwiſe with breath, and that we might as well pretend to make experiments upon inſenſible perſpiration. I have in ſome meaſure treated this point already, by ſhewing it is a ridiculous thing to inſiſt beyond a certain degree upon the evidence of our ſenſes. We do not commonly imagine, that the cleaneſt rooms in which we ſit, are entirely full, not only of air and æther, but of ſuch a mixture of various bodies that are ſuſpended in both, as that, properly ſpeaking, we are ſurrounded with clouds of duſt, which we draw into our bodies every time we fetch our breaths. Yet a ray of ſunſhine is ſufficient to give ocular demonſtration of this, for wherever that ray falls, thoſe motes become viſible. All the world is now ſenſible, that odoriferous bodies have an atmoſphere round them, compoſed of innumerable particles, exhaled by, or abraded from them; but with equal truth it may be affirmed, that all bodies have ſuch an atmoſphere, though not perceptible to every one's ſenſes. Such, for inſtance, as have an averſion to cheeſe, perceive it plainly from a peculiar ſenſation, while others know nothing of it. The ſame thing may be ſaid of a cat, and even more ſtrongly; ſince, except ſuch as have an antipathy, none are in the leaſt ſenſible of the atmoſphere that ſurrounds them, and which notwithſtanding will affect ſome conſtiutions, ſo as to render them faint,

and

and this at a conſiderable diſtance, of which we have inconteſtable evidence [e].

It is a point out of all diſpute, that the mineral effluvia at Potoſi have ſuch an effect upon thoſe who work in the mines, that if it were not for drinking an infuſion of the herb, now called Paraguay tea, it would be impoſſible for them to work there. This is ſo much the more credible, as we know that the fumes of white lead have a very ſtrange effect upon the human body, and yet the ſmell is not very diſagreeable. In coal mines, that damp which is of all others moſt deſtructive, is called, a peaſe-bloom damp, becauſe the ſmell reſembles that of peaſe bloſſoms, which in a leſſer degree is very pleaſant. The fume of charcoal will hardly awake thoſe that are aſleep, and yet is capable, by its ſuffocating ſmell, to lead them to their laſt ſleep; and it has been obſerved by a very great author, that ſuch as have been

[e] Our author having touched upon this ſubject before, is the ſhorter upon it here, but without doubt it deſerves to be thoroughly examined; ſince if we perfectly underſtood how to act upon the human body medicinally through its pores, it is not only poſſible, but highly probable, that ſome relief might be this way given in apoplexies, and other deſperate diſeaſes, where other methods not only fail, but are with difficulty applied. It is upon this principle, that a kind of ſtomacher has been invented in France as a preſervative againſt this diſtemper, in which ſome penetrating remedies are contained; and the news papers tells us that they have great effects.

placed far enough out of the reach of the ſtench of priſoners, as to any ſenſible impreſſion on the olfactory nerves, have yet been infected by a malignant and incurable diſeaſe from thence, which has carried them off in a few days. We may from hence argue, by a parity of reaſon, that there may be wholeſome, as well as unwholeſome fumes; vapours capable of reſtoring health, as well as of filling men with diſeaſes; but in obſerving theſe, we have been leſs curious, becauſe it is natural in all ſenſes to have a quicker feeling of injuries than of benefits. Yet ſome of theſe have been taken notice of, as, for example, in the Eaſt-Indies, when mangoes are ripe, ſuch as are in a declining ſtate recover by walking amongſt the trees. It is aſſerted by authors of credit, that conſumptive perſons in England have recovered by riding or walking in the plains where ſaffron is gathered, and in all countries the ſmell of freſh earth has been obſerved to have a good effect in the like caſe. All theſe inſtances I have given from my memory, and there is no doubt, that upon the bare reading of them, many other, and perhaps ſtronger inſtances, will occur to inquiſitive perſons. [f].

WE

[f] We may add, in confirmation of what our author has advanced in this paragraph, a very remarkable and curious piece of Indian hiſtory, in which not only the Dutch writers agree, but which was confirmed to me by a Dutch phyſician, who had reſided long at Batavia, and was very poſitive as to the fact. The iſland o Ternate was formerly the Montpellier of that part of the world; and

We muſt, however, allow that nothing which has been hitherto ſaid, contributes to the ſolution of the great difficulty how ſuch kind of ſubtile, and almoſt imperceptible effluvia may be collected. In anſwer to this, we might ſay, that the method having been clearly and circumſtantially deſcribed; we refer ourſelves to the experiment, which, if found practicable, will decide for, and if not, will as clearly determine againſt us. However, a few thoughts, which have occured upon the ſubject, may not be unpleaſant to the readers. It is an eaſy, and at the ſame time a very pleaſant method, by which that eſſence is obtained that goes under the name of Bergamot. The rind of the ſmall lemon that affords it, is ſqueezed between the fingers againſt a looking-glaſs plate, which ſtands over the veſſel that is to receive the eſſential oil, and the zeſt flying out of the peel being intercepted and condenſed by the glaſs, falls down in drops. We may alſo obſerve, in very hot weather, and if there be many perſons in a room, their

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and thoſe who were ſinking under all ſorts of diſtempers in the Dutch colonies were ſent thither for the benefit of the air, and generally ſpeaking recovered. But the Eaſt India company having reduced the king of this iſland to ſuch ſtraits, that he was obliged to ſubmit to peace upon any terms they thought fit to preſcribe, he was compelled to cut down and deſtroy his clove-trees, with which that iſland abounded; ſince which time the air is become ſo unwholeſome, that the Dutch are obliged to relieve their garriſons there twice a-year.

breath will cauſe a moiſture on the glaſs windows, which comes nearer to the caſe in queſtion. It is obſerved in the Levitical law, that the leproſy not only infected the bodies of men, but was ſometimes ſo violent, as to become viſible on the very walls of the houſe, for which purifications are preſcribed. Some indeed have fancied that this was peculiar to that country, or to that people; but we want not inſtances of the like nature with regard to infections recorded by very credible authors in other countries [g]. "A pious and learned ſchool-maſter, ſays "Mr. Boyle, that ventured to ſtay in London in the "great plague 1665, and was much employed, as "ſome friends of mine, that knew him and com- "mended him, aſſured me, to viſit the ſick, and diſ- "tribute alms and relief to them, went indiſcrimi- "nately to all ſorts of infected, and even dying per- "ſons, to the number, as he told me, of nine hun- "dred or a thouſand; and being aſked by me about "the infection of other things than walls, he told "me, that being once called to adminiſter ſome

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[g] Leviticus xiv. 33. The Jewiſh doctors in general, and Maimonides the wiſeſt and moſt judicious of them in particular, confine all that is ſaid of this plague of leproſy to the land of Canaan, in which, if they mean in a miraculous ſenſe, and with reſpect to the method of purification, there is no doubt that they are right; but as our author ſays, it is very certain, that in other countries theſe miſerable tokens of the plague have appeared. The inſtance he mentions is to be found in Bayle's works, vol. V. p. 102.

"ghoſtly

" ghoſtly comfort to a poor woman that had buried " ſome children of the plague, he found the room " ſo little, that it ſcarce held any more than the bed " whereon ſhe lay ſick, and an open coffin where- " in he ſaw her huſband lie dead of the ſame " diſeaſe, whom the wife ſoon after followed. In " this little cloſe room they affirmed to him, that " contagious ſteams had produced ſpots on the very " walls; and when I aſked whether he himſelf had " ſeen them, he anſwered, that he had not, but yet " was inclined to believe the thing to be true, not " only upon the ſcore of the relators, but becauſe " he had obſerved the like in his own ſtudy, which " being divided only by a wall from ſome rooms of " a houſe, which the owner had turned into a kind " of a peſthouſe, and in which numbers had died; " in a ſhort time he took notice, that the white wall " of his ſtudy was (ſince the ſickneſs raged, with- " out any other cauſe that he could imagine) ble- " miſhed in divers places with ſpots, like thoſe of " infected perſons." The ſteams of the body then may be collected ſo as to become the object of ſight, and of our other ſenſes; ſo that there is nothing contrary, either to reaſon or nature, in believing that inſenſible perſpiration may become the ſubject of art; and having made this tolerably clear, we may now proceed to ſpeak of other experiments, that, however ſingular and ſtrange, ought not to be thought incredible.

WE have more than once obſerved, that amongſt the followers of Hermes, there are ſeveral ranks or claſſes, and each of theſe are poſſeſſed of particular ſecrets; for none but the ſuperiors, who are generally ſtiled adepts, know how to prepare that exalted eſſence, by which life is preſerved for many centuries. Amongſt theſe leſſer ſecrets, Paracelſus taught his followers one, which ought by no means to be ſlighted, and this was, that of procuring, by art, a total renovation of vigour, like that of the old man at Tarentum, or the abbeſs before-mentioned. In order to comprehend this clearly, we muſt take a view of the principles upon which all ſuch preparations are comprehended, and they are theſe. The Creator, in the opinion of theſe philoſophers, has fixed in every being a ſeed for its multiplication, not excepting metals themſelves; and that in this ſeed lies concealed a ſmall ſpark, which animates and directs the ſeed to form only the particular kind of being, peculiar to its own ſpecies. This little ſpark of life, or animation, aſſigned by nature, is the more firm, or permanent, as the life of the being is required to be more conſtant; and therefore every thing, which is produced out of the ſeed, is to be aſſigned chiefly to the aura, or animating ſpark thereof. Hence therefore they conclude, that the primum ens is to be ſeparated by the art of chemiſtry, by the ſame medium by which it was communicated; as for example, the ſpiritus

rector

rector of cinnamon, to be extracted with water, by which means they hoped to procure a medicine capable of communicating the ſame durability to the human body, as is peculiar to the aura of the ſubſtance from whence the primum ens was prepared [a]. Whether any experiment has been made of this or not, I cannot ſay; but of another medicine of the like kind, by which, if any credit be due to the teſtimony of one of the greateſt phyſicians in Europe, almoſt incredible wonders have been done; I ſhall ſet down the preparation.

In the proper ſeaſon of the year, when the herb is at its full growth, and conſequently its juices in their higheſt vigour, gather, at the fitteſt time of the day, a ſufficient quantity of balm, wipe it clean,

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[a] The true character of Paracelſus, to ſpeak ingenuouſly, does no great credit to his writings. He was a man of a diſturbed head, a diſtracted mind, and a diſſolute life. Often wild and extravagant in his notions, always rude and brutal in his behaviour, ſometimes talking in the ſtile of an enthuſiaſt, at others, not without a tincture of impiety; in a word, ſo deſultory and unequal, that in one page you find nothing but the dialect of Bedlam, and in the next, you have diſcoveries that argue a wonderful ſuperiority of genius, and a moſt amazing penetration. He wrote much, he lived faſt, he died a very young man; and if one was to give the character of his writings in a line, it would be this, that upon the firſt reading, he ſeems to be a madman, but upon the ſecond we perceive he had lucid intervals, in which he was a very extraordinary perſon, and had an amazing genius for chemiſtry.

and

and pick it; then put it into a ſtone mortar, and by laborious beating, reduce it into a thin pap. Take this glutinous and odoriferous ſubſtance, and put it into a bolt-head, which is to be hermetically ſealed, and then place it in a dunghill, or ſome gentle heat equivalent thereto, where it muſt digeſt for forty days. When it is taken out, the matter will appear clearer, thinner, and have a quicker ſcent; then ſeparate the groſſer parts, which however are not to be thrown away. Put this liquid into a gentle bath, that the remaining groſs particles may perfectly ſubſide. In the mean time, dry, calcine, and extract the fixt ſalt of the groſſer parts, ſeparated as before-mentioned, which fixt ſalt is to be joined to the liquors when philtrated. Take next ſea ſalt, well purified, melt it, and by ſetting it in a cold place, it will run and become clear and limpid. Take equal parts of both liquors, mix them thoroughly, and having hermetically ſealed them in a proper glaſs, let them be carefully expoſed to the ſun in the warmeſt ſeaſon of the year, for about ſix weeks. At the end of this ſpace, the primum ens of the balm will appear ſwimming on the top like a bright green oil, which is to be carefully ſeparated and preſerved. Of this oil, a few drops taken in a glaſs of wine, for ſeveral days together, will bring to paſs thoſe wonders that are reported of the counteſs of Deſmond, and others; for it will entirely change the juices of the human body, revive the decaying flame of life, and reſtore

the ſpirits of long loſt youth. If after the medicine is thus prepared, any doubt be had of its efficacy, or of its manner of operation, let a few drops be given every day in raw meat, to an old dog or cat, and in leſs than a fortnight, by the change of their coats, and other inconteſtible ſigns, the virtues of this preparation will ſufficiently appear [b].

An objection has been ſtarted by a perſon of very great knowledge in phyſic, to the efficacy of medicines of this nature. He thinks, that ſuch ſubtile eſſences

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[b] This is the preparation of balm which Mr. Boyle mentions in his works, and in which he tells us, that Dr. Le Fevre, gave him the following account of it, in the preſence of a famous phyſician, and another Virtuoſo, to whom he appealed, as knowing the truth of what he ſaid; that an intimate friend of his, whom, ſays Mr. Boyle, he named to me, having prepared the primum ens of balm, to ſatisfy himſelf the better of its effects, made the trial upon himſelf, and took of it according to the preſcription for about a fortnight, long before which his nails, both of hands and feet, began to looſen themſelves from the ſkin (but without pain) which at length falling off, of their own accord, this gentleman keeps yet by him, in a box, for a rarity; but would not purſue the trial any further, being ſatisfied with what he had found, and being in no need of ſuch phyſic. But having given of the ſame medicated wine, for ten or twelve days, to a woman that ſerved in his houſe, and was near ſeventy years of age, without letting her know what he expected it ſhould do; her purgationes menſtruæ came upon her again in a ſufficiently great quantity, to frighten her ſo much, that he durſt proſecute the experiment no further. And when I aſked, why he made no trial upon beaſts, it was anſwered, that though

eſſences would not fail to alter and change the body into which they were received, ſo as that it ſhould loſe its own, and acquire new qualities; or as he choſe to expreſs it himſelf, if a golden elixir, taken into the body of man, could introduce firmneſs and durableneſs, it would no doubt bring along with it fixedneſs and ſolidity, ſo that of a machine, by the help of this chemical remedy, we ſhall have a ſtatue. It is very ſtrange, that ſuch as charge the hermetic philoſophers with arguing looſely, reaſon in many reſpects more looſely than they. We find the juices of vegetables act very powerfully upon metals, we find metals act alſo ſtrongly upon animal bodies; what reaſon then is there to believe, that a tincture of gold ſhould act upon the body of man, as ſome think, if fitly prepared, it ſhould act upon baſer metals? I ſay, what reaſon is there to believe this? and if there be none, it is ſtill leſs difficult to apprehend the operation of the primum ens of balm. We know by experience, that this herb has many and great virtues, that they may be extracted by different methods, and thereby contribute to cure ſeve-

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though he had but little of the medicine, yet he put apart an old hen, and moiſtening her food with ſome drops of it, for a week, about the ſixth day, ſhe began to moult her feathers by degrees, till ſhe became ſtark naked; but before a fortnight was paſt, ſhe began to regain others, which, when they were come to their full growth, appeared fairer and better coloured than the firſt, and he added, that beſides, that her creſt was raiſed, ſhe alſo laid more eggs than ſhe was wont.

ral

ral diſeaſes. Why may not then this wonderful collection of all the primitive ſparks of life, in this vigorous plant, being collected and called out by a cauſe ſo natural and powerful as the extraordinary heat of the ſun, become a medicine of wonderful efficacy, or what is there either irrational or unphiloſophical in aſſerting, that this power would be compounded of the forces of both bodies, that from which it is extracted, and that into which it is taken? have we not daily experience of the operations of mercury, in the very way that I ſuggeſt, that is to ſay, in acting by the weight and ſubtility of its particles, as well as by the peculiar and ſpecific qualities inherent in them, ſo as to produce great changes in the body; but changes conformable to the nature of the body, and not by converſion, either of its ſolid or fluid parts, into a metallic ſubſtance: ſo that this objection, how plauſible ſoever it may appear, or whatever authority it might borrow from the great reputation of the perſon who made it, is, when ſtrictly conſidered, of no weight at all. His argument, if it would prove any thing, would prove too much; and it is a known rule in right reaſoning, that what proves too much, proves nothing. There is certainly great folly in believing crudely all that Paracelſus, and Van Helmont, or their followers, ſay; but perhaps there is no leſs folly in rudely rejecting all that they advance; and as in other caſes, ſo in this, the middle way is beſt; we ought to take nothing upon truſt either from them, or

from their opponents; for if theſe men were enthuſiaſts, with reſpect to that art upon which they have written, thoſe who have undertaken to refute them, write frequently with ſuch a viſible ſpirit of contradiction, as is as apt to miſlead mankind as any ſort of enthuſiaſm whatever. It is indeed true, that partly from the obſcurity, partly from the pomp and bombaſt of their expreſſions, it is ſometimes very difficult to underſtand their meaning; but, notwithſtanding this, even the wiſeſt and beſt judges have allowed, that there are a great many uſeful truths in their writings, when thoroughly underſtood[c]. Why then, amongſt others, may not this be one of thoſe uſeful truths?

I COULD mention another preparation from the vital part of the air itſelf, which is a great ſecret amongſt theſe philoſophers, and is perhaps the white

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[c] It deſerves the reader's notice, with how much facility, as well as dexterity, our author has introduced a great number of additions, without the leaſt prejudice to the method obſerved in his performance, and without leaving out a letter of what he had publiſhed before. If he had thrown theſe additions into a ſupplement, they would have been of very little, if of any uſe; but as they are now ranged in their proper places, they elucidate the ſubject, ſtrengthen his arguments, and bring a new weight of authorities, to the ſupport of his ſyſtem. It ſeems to be now as complete as we can expect a work of this nature, and therefore it may be preſumed, that the author, in juſtice to his own reputation, will leave it as it ſtands, to the only true teſt of merit, viz. the judgment of ſucceeding times.

dove

dove ſo often mentioned in the writings of Philalethes, of which thus much is certain, that when the air is once deſpoiled of this principle, it is no longer fit for animal reſpiration; and it was by a contrivance of this kind, that the famous Cornelius Drebell made that liquor, which ſupplied the place of air in the machine he contrived for carrying on a kind of ſubmarine navigation. This medicine, which is, as I have ſaid, extracted from the air, is whiter than the ſnow, colder than the ice, and ſo volatile, that if a quantity of a nutmeg be expoſed to the air, it is abſorbed thereby in the ſpace of a few ſeconds. This ſecret, which is uſed for the ſame purpoſes as the former, is ſtiled Aura puellarum [d]. We may gather from all this, that if the hermetic philoſophers have in reality any ſuch ſecret as they boaſt of, for the preſervation of human life, it is built upon the ſame principles with thoſe which I have already laid down, and conſequently no true adept can, conſiſtently with his own notion of things, oppoſe my doctrine, eſpecially when he conſiders with what reſtrictions it is offered, ſince, I do not propoſe, as the ſages do, the

[d] Whoever conſults the Liber Mutus, will plainly perceive, that the firſt matter is taken from the air; but by a method very different from that which I here ſuggeſt, though poſſibly they may both contribute to the ſame end, ſince it is eaſy to conceive, that the firſt matter of the philoſophers may reſide in ſeveral places; nay, ſome of them have affirmed, that it is to be found every where; the famous Jacob Boehmen aſſerted, that it was to be met with in the dirt of the ſtreets.

prolonging man's life to the term of a thouſand years, neither do I promiſe the renovation of ſtrength, as ſome meaner artiſts have done; all I contend for is, the poſſibility of making ſuch uſe of youthful ſpirits, as for a time to keep off the inconveniencies of age, which, though far inferior to what others aſſert they are able to perform, would ſtill be of the utmoſt benefit to mankind, if with facility it could be carried into practice.

I KNOW very well it may, and I doubt not but it will be objected, if Hermippus was ſo wiſe a man, why, inſtead of drawing old age to ſuch a length, did he not preſerve the vigour of his youth? this ſurely would have been by far a nobler diſcovery, and to which the young ladies would with the greateſt readineſs have contributed. But I muſt put ſuch people as theſe in mind, that as in this treatiſe I have inſerted nothing which may not be ſome way or other ſerviceable, either to the inſtruction or entertainment of mankind, ſo I ſhall not think myſelf at all obliged to take notice of any ludicrous reflections. The preſervation of life, the defending the human body from decay, and rendering it a fit tenement for the ſoul to inhabit, in that ſeaſon in which ſhe is moſt capable of exerting her nobleſt faculties, are grave and ſerious ſubjects; with which no trivial matters ought to mingle. Beſides, to ſpeak my opinion freely, though I think the method of Hermippus extremely proper for repairing the

the waſtes of nature, and preventing the incommodities which uſually attend on years; yet I am far from believing, that this method would contribute at all to the extention of youth, but rather the contrary; and for this, I think, I am able to offer ſome very probable reaſons.

IN the firſt place, it will be neceſſary to obſerve, that I do not here mean by youth, a ſtate of infancy or childhood, but rather that robuſt ſtate between twenty-five and forty; for the converſation of very young people with each other, I conceive to be as wholeſome for their bodies, as it is pleaſant and agreeable to their minds. But when the human body is arrived at its full ſtrength, and is in that ſtate of health in which temperance and equanimity will maintain it, a ſurcharge of animal ſpirits may not only prove uſeleſs, but dangerous. It is an old, and a very true obſervation, that the moſt florid ſtate of health, is that in which a man is in the greateſt peril, in caſe he received any infection, and the reaſon is obvious, viz. becauſe the animal ſpirits act then with the utmoſt vigour, and conſequently muſt do the more miſchief, if by any means they are tainted. From the ſame method of reaſoning, we may conclude, that ſuch a manner of living as that which we have ſuppoſed Hermippus led, might be attended with inconveniencies to a man of a robuſt conſtitution, and perhaps incline him to frenzies, or at leaſt to fevers. A pure air, light diet, moderate exercife, and a perfect dominion

over his paſſions, with a few ſlight remedies taken on proper occaſions, and according as nature directs, may maintain a man in the full poſſeſſion of health and ſpirits to ſixty, and then it is time enough for him to think of avoiding the inconveniencies which uſually attend old age. I might alſo obſerve, that the converſation of many young women might, in the ſummer of life, draw along with it other inconveniencies; but theſe are ſubjects on which I do not chuſe to inſiſt, becauſe it is not eaſy to treat them with that delicacy which a philoſophic diſcourſe, like this, requires; and becauſe the ſligheſt hint is ſufficient to ſuggeſt more to a man of good ſenſe, than is at all neceſſary to be delivered upon this ſubject. I take it therefore for granted, that I have aſſigned the proper bounds to remedy, and that I may ſafely define it, the cordial of advanced years, which can never be ſafely adminiſtered, till from a juſt application of reaſon, there has been produced an abſolute retreat of appetite *.

BUT if any one ſhould be mad enough to purſue this objection further, and cry out, of what ſignificancy then is your remedy? why in ſuch a ſituation would you extend life at all, or of what uſe is years when deprived of enjoyments? If I ſay there are any ſo wild as to talk in this manner, my anſwer is, that they miſtake my meaning. I am clearly of opinion, that the pleaſures of the mind are far ſuperior to all ſenſual delights, and that the cultivating youthful

* Cicer. de Senectute.

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underſtandings, which is the buſineſs in which I have ſuppoſed my old man employed, is a pleaſant and noble undertaking, every way worthy of the ſoul's ſupremeſt faculties, and carrying along with it its own reward, viz. a ſecond youth, more pleaſing, more delightful, than the firſt. For as on the one hand, I cannot allow that ſuch a perſon ſhould gratify, or ſo much as feel his paſſions, ſo on the other, I would not have him plunged into deep and perplexing ſtudies, but rather amuſed and diverted by purſuits of another nature. At particular ſeaſons, indeed, he might diſcourſe with his friends on grave and ſerious topics; but I would not have ſuch converſations return too frequently, for fear of their leading him by degrees into melancholy, which is nothing elſe but fixing the thoughts too intently on a ſingle object. In order to acquire and maintain a green old age, there is nothing ſo requiſite as chearfulneſs of mind, which can never be ſecured if we meditate much on abſtruſe ſubjects. I do not ſay, that theſe are always to be neglected; but what I ſay is, that this is not the ſeaſon of life in which they ought to be purſued. They require ſuch vigour, ſuch attention, and ſuch a degree of penetration, as would induce ſo great a waſte of ſpirits as might defeat the intention of that remedy, which I would recommend, and therefore I lay it down as a ſupplemental rule, that theſe are to be avoided.

THERE is, as far as my foreſight will carry me, but one objection more, that can be raiſed againſt my ſyſtem; and this muſt come from the quarter of the politicians, who conceive nothing to be right or worthy of encouragement, which does not ſquare with their notions, which are, however, generally ſpeaking, not very agreeable to thoſe of other men. It would not therefore ſurprize me, if theſe gentlemen ſhould take it into their hands, to treat this as a whimſical and trifling performance, becauſe I know that according to their ſyſtem, old men are ſo many incumbrances, of which the ſtate ought to be diſcharged. It is upon this principle I preſume, that ſome Indian nations make great feaſts in their families when their chief becomes decrepid, and when theſe rejoicings are over, fairly put him out of the way[f]. Our free-thinkers in politics, therefore, muſt neceſſarily have a bad opinion (at leaſt while they are young) of ſuch a propoſition as this, which intends no more than prolonging the lives of thoſe who,

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[f] I remember to have read, in a late French writer, that this is practiſed by ſome of the barbarous nations, who live in the neighbourhood of Hudſon's bay; and he ſays further, that he was preſent at one of theſe feaſts, at the cloſe of which, the ſon cut the throat of his father. I do not recollect, that he beſtows any reflections upon this paſſage; but from the account he has given us of the country, I think it no difficult matter to diſtinguiſh the cauſe of ſo inhuman (I ſhould be in the wrong to call it ſo

who, in the account of our Machiavelists, ought to be in their graves already. What benefit, say they, can result to society from maintaining people past their labours; and who, according to this very scheme, are declared unfit for propagation? the public is only benefited by active and industrious persons, why then should so much care be taken to preserve people fit only for a sedentary life? if the ordinary laws of nature can be dispensed with, let it be in favour of the public weal; why should the extravagant desire of life be gratified, rather than any other extravagant desire whatever? Reflections like these, it is evident, must induce these over-wise persons to treat my book with contempt, whatever opinion they may have of the arguments contained in it; and therefore it is necessary for me to shew, that these maxims, how plausible, how refined soever they may appear, are very far from being either just or reasonable, and which is still of greater weight in the present case, are far from being calculated for the benefit of mankind in general [g].

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so brutal) a custom, which I take to be this, that they find it very difficult in that part of the world to acquire subsistance, and therefore think themselves under a kind of necessity of maintaining only such as are useful. This, I persuade myself, was the original of so horrid a practice, which cannot, however, be founded on real necessity, because these people who murder their parents, preserve their children, though equally helpless.

[g] It may be, perhaps, thought I exaggerated a little in supposing, that there are people capable of reasoning in such a manner;

IT is, I think, a fact ſo well eſtabliſhed, that I need be at no great pains to prove it, that moſt of the miſchiefs and miſeries brought upon private families, and even upon whole nations, flow from the warmth of mens paſſions, and from their indulging their irregular inclinations at the expence of others, nay, and of ſociety itſelf. I cannot, therefore, help thinking, that it might be a means of leſſening theſe evils, if we could increaſe the number of thoſe who are free from ſuch irregular and depraved appetites, and are conſequently moſt capable of conducting

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ner; but whoever conſiders the principles of the Spartan government, and the ſyſtem of morals, recommended by Lycurgus, will be of another opinion. Neither are we to imagine, that only ſevere politicians are inclined to ſuch a doctrine; there have been in all ages ſome polite writers, and refined wits, who have been inclined to treat old age, not as a misfortune only, but as a crime. For inſtance, Cornelius Gallus, one of the favourites of Auguſtus, and himſelf the patron of Virgil, and of Horace, paints old age thus:

Stat dubius tremuluſq; ſenex, ſemperq; malorum
Credulus et ſtultus quæ facit ipſe timet.
Laudat præteritos, preſentes deſpicit annos:
Hoc tantùm in rectum quod facit ipſe putat.

Trembling and doubtful, ſtill the old we find,
And much to credit all ill news inclin'd;
Fooliſhly fearful of whate'er they do,
And when it's done, they're apprehenſive too.
Paſs'd times their praiſe, the preſent claim their ſpight,
And only what they do themſelves is right.

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with judgment and integrity, either public or private affairs. It is remarkable, that in all well-governed ſtates, a certain maturity of age is required before men are entruſted not only with the management of public concerns, but of their own. Upon what reaſon then is this founded? Is it not becauſe they are thought to want in the firſt place, the lights of experience, and in the next, to be too much hurried by their paſſions? If this be right, and if it be not right, the wiſeſt men in all ages have been in the wrong; If this, I ſay, be right, why ſhould we fancy men paſſed their labours; for being in poſſeſſion of thoſe qualities which are certainly the firſt ingredients in the conſtituting true wiſdom? There will be always people enough in the world full of that heat, vigour, and ſtrength, which is requiſite for carrying on the active and laborious parts of buſineſs; but we ſee plainly, that private families are brought to ruin, and by degrees, great ſtates decay for want of that moderation, experience, and foreſight, of which men far in years, and whoſe ſpirits are not oppreſſed with the infirmities of age, are uſually poſſeſſed. If, therefore, we regard the eaſe and happineſs of mankind, rather than hurry and noiſe, and eſteem ſuch a government, as preſerves its ſubjects in the conſtant enjoyment of theſe bleſſings, better than that which employs them at the expence of their own eaſe and happineſs, in diſturbing thoſe of their neighbours, then there can be no weight in this part of the objection. As to what reſpects generation,

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it is a very ſlight and idle ſurmiſe; for if in popiſh countries monaſteries are found no great inconvenience, where thoſe that fill them make vows of celibacy in the flower of their age, certainly for men who are turned of ſeventy to forbear getting children, can never be an inconvenience to any ſtate.

THIS is undoubtedly a ſufficient anſwer as to the general reaſoning of thoſe I would refute, but with reſpect to the doctrine I have endeavoured to eſtabliſh, a ſtill clearer and more explicit anſwer might be given. For without enquiring whether their principles be wrong or right, I may eaſily obſerve, that nothing I have laid down tends to burthen ſociety with a race of dotards. What I propoſe, is quite the contrary. If, on the one hand, I plead for the extenſion of human life, I recommend, on the other, ſuch a method as muſt preſerve the faculties in the higheſt order. Nor is it to be at all apprehended, that the number of men who ſhall prolong their lives by this method, in caſe it ſhould be ever carried into practice, will be exceſſive, or burthenſome to ſociety, the very nature of it provides againſt any ſuch inconvenience, by requiring ſuch moderation and ſelf-denial, as will not frequently be found. It is, therefore, an unjuſt and unfair imputation upon my principles, that they tend to burthen the world with uſeleſs people, ſince the utmoſt to which they can be ſtrained is, that I am for preſerving as long as poſſible, the lives of ſuch as may be uſeful. As to the

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ſubſiſtance again of ſuch people, it is eaſy to diſcern, that this can be but a very trifling expence, when compared even with what they are able to acquire towards the increaſe of the common ſtock. So that conſidered in this, which is the very worſt light in which the thing can be put, a true politician, and one who has a proper regard for the intereſt, and, at the ſame time, a juſt reſpect for the rights of mankind, will be far from thinking that I have offered any thing which can be prejudicial to a well-ordered ſociety, but have rather provided a very good method for ſecuring a conſtant ſupply of ſuch counſellors, as may preſerve it in the beſt order poſſible.

On this occaſion, I beg leave to cite a paſſage which Tully hath put into the mouth of the elder Cato [h], that deſerves as much attention from its ſolidity and good-ſenſe, as it does praiſe for the beauty and accuracy of ſtile in which it it delivered. Cato is there anſwering the very objection which I have been treating. "If, ſays he, petulance and luſt be vices "more frequent among young men than old, yet "all young men are not infected with them, but "ſuch only as want proper talents, ſo it is with that "ſort of diſtemper which you call dotage, it is in-"deed the diſeaſe of old men; but, however, all old "men are not infected with it. Appius was for ſome

[h] Cicer. de Senectute, c. ii.

"years

" years quite dark, and yet he managed a family
" of four ſons grown up, and five daughters, with
" abundance of relations and clients, who depended
" upon him. He kept his mind always in order,
" and though his vigour decayed, yet his ſenſes ne-
" ver failed him. He preſerved to the laſt moment
" his character, and his authority; every body look-
" ed up towards him as became their ſtation; his
" ſlaves feared, his children revered, and all who
" were about him, loved him. In a word, he kept
" up the old diſcipline, and did honour to the
" Roman name, by preſerving the manners of his
" family untainted. So that it is plain, old age
" may maintain a graceful ſuperiority, if it be jea-
" lous of its prerogative; if on all occaſions it main-
" tains its right, if it never ſneaks and gives way,
" but keeps up a manly ſpirit to the laſt. For as
" I approve ſome qualities of age in a young man,
" ſo a youthful ſpirit is very commendable in men
" in years, for while they preſerve this, though
" the body may feel the effects of age, yet the
" mind ſtands out of its reach. At this very inſtant
" I am employed in writing the ſeventh book of
" my antiquities, and am actually making large
" collections from ſuch old records as may ſerve
" my purpoſe. I likewiſe review, and ſometimes
" touch a-freſh, the orations I have formerly made
" in the capital cauſes, wherein I have been con-
" cerned: I ſtill keep up my ſtock of knowlege in
" augurial, pontifical, and civil law, and have time

" enough

" enough to read a great deal of Greek beſides. I " conſtantly uſe the Pythagorean method for the " exerciſe of my memory, and every evening run " over in my mind, whatever I have ſaid, heard, " or done, that day. Theſe are the exerciſes of the " underſtanding, and in theſe, as in a chariot, the " ſoul takes the air; while I am capable of theſe, I " don't give myſelf much concern about bodily de- " cays, I am always at the command of my friends, " attend the ſervice of the houſe frequently, and " diſtinguiſh myſelf in debates, where a man com- " paſſes more by the ſtrength of his faculties, than " he can do elſewhere, by force of arms. But ſhould " it ever prove my misfortune to be confined to my " bed, and be thereby rendered incapable of go- " ing through theſe employments, yet the very " thoughts of what I would do, if I were able, " would conſole me. But, thanks be to heaven, " I have no reaſon to apprehend any ſuch thing, " I have been a better huſband of my time than " ſo; for let a man be but conſtantly exerciſed in " labours like theſe, and he will not ſo ſoon find " the breaches of age. Years will ſteal upon him " inſenſibly, he will grow old by degrees, and with- " out feeling it; nay, when he comes to break at " laſt, the houſe will crumble gently, and fall down " ſo ſlowly, as not to give him any great pain."

This is a very fine picture, and contains a more finiſhed apology for that ſtate of life which I am endeavouring to extend, than my abilities would ſuffer me

to draw, but the very producing it ſerves my purpoſe better than if I had wrote it. If I follow the ſentiments of Cicero, and the example of Cato the elder, who ſhall queſtion either my ſenſe, or my conduct?

IT ought to be further conſidered, that for perfecting many of the ſciences, a longer life is requiſite than men uſually enjoy; or, to ſpeak with greater propriety, the free exerciſe of their faculties to a more advanced age. If we examine all the improvements that have been made in true ſcience, we ſhall find, that they have proceeded from men, who have exerciſed their thoughts in ſuch kind of ſtudies for a long courſe of years. The laſt books of Ariſtotle are eſteemed the moſt perfect, ſo are thoſe of Seneca, which he wrote in an advanced age; and we may ſay the ſame thing with reſpect to modern philoſophers; ſuch as Gaſſendi, Bacon, and Newton. A ſerene old age is therefore of the higheſt conſequence in this reſpect, ſince it would contribute to furniſh the world with new and uſeful lights, and prevent the expectations they conceive from the early productions of great men, from being fruſtrated, as they frequently are, by their premature deaths. I muſt likewiſe obſerve, that mechanical inventions require much time to perfect them, and that very profitable diſcoveries, and very uſeful manufactures have been loſt, by the death of thoſe who firſt cultivated them, of which many inſtances may be given. We may likewiſe remark, that ſettling any new plantation;

reforming

reforming a ſociety; or, in ſhort, reducing any people who have been long under an ill form of government, or in a great meaſure without any, requires length of days. Lewis XIV. changed entirely the face of things in France during his reign, which was principally owing to the length of it, as it gave him an opportunity of ſeeing moſt of his ſchemes brought to bear; whereas the unexpected death of the great Czar Peter, cauſed many of his projects to be buried in oblivion, and muſt have overturned the whole of his glorious deſign for reforming his ſubjects, and raiſing the credit of his crown, with the reſt of the European powers, if, which was ſcarce to be expected, his ſucceſſors had not, generally ſpeaking, perſiſted in the purſuit of his plan. We may therefore eaſily diſcern, that ſuch an extenſion of life as this treatiſe propoſes, would be ſo far from contributing to burthen the world with an uſeleſs race of old men, that it would really furniſh it with ſuch people as are moſt wanted for the improvement of knowledge, the perfecting mechanical diſcoveries, and contributing in other reſpects to the welfare of mankind.

UPON the whole, therefore, I think I may very juſtly conclude, that by examining this ancient inſcription, I have not only exerciſed my thoughts in a manner that may contribute to the amuſement of the learned; but that I have hinted many things

which may be of public utility. In this reſpect, indeed, I think, I have made the proper uſe of the inſcription; for certainly, it is much better to inform ourſelves as to things than words, and the world would be much more indebted to the labours of learned men, if they would pay that regard to this maxim which it deſerves. What uſe would it be of to mankind, ſuppoſing it poſſible for me to fix the reign of the Roman emperor, under which Hermippus flouriſhed? or what thanks would my readers owe me, if I had endeavoured to diſcuſs whether he lived to an hundred and fifty-five, or a hundred and fifteen only. Have I not choſen the better part, in examining what may ſtill be of ſome uſe, viz. by what method he arrived at ſo great an age, and how far it is practicable for us to follow his method. I think, I may go ſtill farther, and affirm, that I have made it at leaſt extremely probable, that the *anhelitus puellarum* is in ſome meaſure the breath of life; in order to which, I hope, I have effectually deſtroyed ſome prejudices that affected the minds even of people of good ſenſe, as to the ſettled term of human life, and the impoſſibility of prolonging it by art. I have likewiſe, in the courſe of this diſſertation, collected the ſentiments of ſeveral great men, who think, or at leaſt ſeem to me to think, in the ſame way that I do, and have thereby given an opportunity to the curious and inquiſitive reader, of ſearching

ing more ſtrictly into their opinions, in order to do them juſtice, in caſe, after mature conſideration, he thinks that I have failed in ſo doing.

If this ſhould contribute little to the elucidation of the preſent point, yet it may prove the means of bringing many things of conſequence to light. We have made it evident, by our citations from old books, that many of the diſcoveries for which the moderns are famous, were actually known to the learned in former times; whence we may probably conjecture, that ſome other things were known to them, with which we are not acquainted, and the rather, becauſe there is ſcarce any country where antient monuments are to be found, but we may diſcern in them marks of ſkill and capacity, that tranſcend the power of modern workmen, and tho' theſe may not be agreeable to the preſent taſte, which ſeems to be a handſome expreſſion for the reigning humour of mankind, that changes too often to deſerve the name of a rule, yet they ſtill manifeſt great quickneſs of invention, and the poſſeſſion of many arts, that are now loſt. It is ſome credit to antiquity, that the oldeſt building in the world, which is the temple of Theſeus at Athens, is by far the fineſt; and in literature again, Homer and Hippocrates plainly prove, that in point of genius, or of induſtry, the firſt ages are yet unrivalled. There are ſeveral roads which lead to true wiſdom;

we may ſometimes reach it by going backwards, as well as forwards, and profit as much by detecting the prejudices of the moderns, as by refuting the errors of antiquity. It is a juſt obſervation of the great lord Verulam, that much learning frees us from thoſe miſtakes into which we are plunged by having only a little. When firſt the moderns began to examine the writings of Herodotus, and Pliny, they found nothing but abſurdities and improbabilities; but now, that we are better acquainted with experimental philoſophy, we begin to have a better opinion of theſe authors, and are obliged to confeſs, that in ſome caſes ſagacity may ſupply experience. I am, however, ready to admit, that in ſome branches of ſcience we have out-done the antients very much; but what of that, we are ſtill far ſhort of perfection. Our very diſcoveries prove it; for example, we diſcern the effects of gravity, we ſee the whole mechaniſm of the univerſe depend upon it; but the cauſe has been hitherto inexplicable. We are well acquainted with the many properties of the needle, which were ſecrets to former times, but the cauſe of its variation remains a ſecret to us. We have, indeed, made ſome bold gueſſes at both, and it is not impoſſible, that poſterity may be able to demonſtrate our conjectures; as it is on the other hand likewiſe poſſible, that they may prove them to be only idle conjectures. If we would avoid being deceived, we muſt decline bigotry of

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all ſorts; we muſt not carry our veneration for the antients too far, and, at the ſame time, we ought not to be afraid of uſing a juſt freedom with the moderns; ſince it is not our buſineſs to admire others, but to inſtruct ourſelves.

WITH the ſame view of coming at truth, by ſetting the ſubject of which I treat in different lights, I have ſtated the opinions of others fairly, and have reaſoned upon them as freely as I deſire to ſee my ſyſtem treated. I have given the reader the ſentiments of aſtrologers, and of hermetic philoſophers, on this inſcription, and have left it to him to decide, whether they are more in the right than I, or whether we may not be all miſtaken, and this inſcription have at laſt ſome other ſecret, and yet more probable ſenſe than any of us have reached. To encourage an exact diſcuſſion of this, I have often inculcated the uſefulneſs of ſuch an enquiry, and, I think, have fully proved without the poſſibility of a reply, that as it is very practicable to extend the thread of life beyond that length to which it uſually reaches; ſo this will be a real benefit, and not an idle or trifling diſcovery. Theſe are the principal points that I have laboured, and to avoid that heavineſs and dryneſs which is commonly complained of in diſcourſes of this kind: I have frequently made excurſions for the entertainment of myſelf and my readers, and have inſerted abun-

dance of curious paſſages from ſcarce and valuable books, that I hope will make full amends for the trouble of peruſing this treatiſe, even to ſuch as may remain unconvinced of the truth, or practicability of my ſyſtem. At leaſt, I can ſay this for my book, and for myſelf, that nothing has been omitted within the reach of my power, which might render it at once both profitable and pleaſant; and therefore, I hope, that if any one ſhall take the trouble of criticiſing it, he will at leaſt treat it with that candour and good manners which I have uſed through the whole, and not with that ſurly and pedantic peeviſhneſs which is too often viſible in the works of minor critics, who value themſelves much more on expoſing the faults of other men, than on manifeſting any valuable qualities in themſelves, and are better pleaſed to deſtroy an edifice erected by another, than to acquire a juſt reputation by raiſing a better ſtructure of their own.

THERE is one thing more I muſt remark, and it is this, that my ſyſtem is entirely on the right ſide. I have not undertaken to demonſtrate as many have done, a paradox in the teeth of common ſenſe, and the common intereſt of the human ſpecies, of which the famous encomium on folly, and the panegyric on drunkenneſs, are glaring inſtances; but what I have laid down in this diſcourſe, is, with a view to public utility, and from a deſire of doing

good

good; if, therefore, upon thoroughly ſifting this diſpute, the matter ſhall come at laſt to be in equilibrio, I hope the turn of the ſcales will be allowed me; for ſurely, if ſenſe be preferable to dotage, eaſe to pain, or life to death, I have a fair title to this favour. I would not be underſtood to intereſt, by this means, the inclinations or prejudices of my readers, on my ſide, for that might prove detrimental to truth; but I introduce this remark, to ſecure me againſt the effects of a petulant humour, which reigns but too much in the world, of diſliking whatever has the appearance of novelty, and ſuppoſing, that there is ſomething equally juſt and wiſe, in maintaining old opinions againſt new, and running down any ſyſtem upon its firſt appearance. Againſt this unequitable prepoſſeſſion, in favour of antique notions, I ſet up this claim to the good will of men, founded on the benefits reſulting from my ſyſtem to the human ſpecies, either conſidered as individuals, or in ſociety. It was upon the ſame principle, that the late Dr. Harvey eſtabliſhed his doctrine of the circulation of the blood, which he juſtly obſerved, would exempt the art of phyſic from many reproaches, and enable us to give a clearer and more rational account of the animal œconomy. On this baſis too ſtands the philoſophy of Sir Iſaac Newton, which is perhaps the nobleſt effort of the human underſtanding. I do not mean, by this, to compare my invention with theirs, or myſelf to either

ther of those great men. What I design the reader should collect from these remarks, is this, that if in proposing new systems, the wisest and ablest men have desired, that some allowances should be made them; it cannot be wondered, that I should expect also some indulgence, who, in comparison of them, know myself to be but little and weak.

HERE then let me rest this affair, and after taking so much pains to render this work not altogether unworthy the view of the public, or the eye of equal and impartial judges, I resign it freely to their consideration, and depend upon their candour and humanity for the kind acceptance of my labours.

FINIS.

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